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MILTON'S

POETICAL WORKS.

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MILTON'S

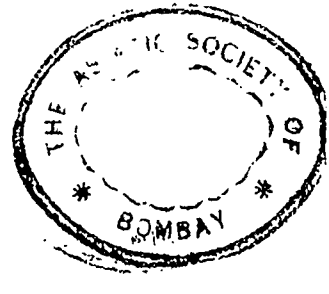
POETICAL WORKS.

With Life, Critical Dissertation, and Explanatory Notes,

BY THE

REV. GEORGE GILFILLAN.

Donated in memory of
Prof. SHANTA TUMKUR



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THE LIFE OF JOHN MILTON.

ALL biographies are, more or less, skeletons. Even Boswell's Life of Johnson, which is the fullest in the world, is but an outline of its gigantic subject. This is much more true of the lives of those distinguished men who lived before biography had become a necessary article of public entertainment—before conversation was a marketable commodity—who were either lost in the general *melée* of the warfare and action of their times, or who cultivated a majestic solitude, living "collaterally or aside" to the world and their own age. It is remarkable, that the four greatest of all poets, Homer, Dante, Shakspere, and Milton, are those precisely of whom least has been told us, and the incidents of whose private history are in a peculiar degree at once scanty and uncertain. Homer is little more than a Voice, lonely, melancholy, and powerful, rhapsodizing on the Chian strand. Dante stands forth more clearly from the clouds of the past, but he, too, is surrounded by darkness, and his personality is that of a shade. Shakspere has been described as a munificent and modest benefactor, who knocked at the door of the human family by night—threw in inestimable wealth—fled—and the sound of his footsteps was all the tidings he gave of himself. Of Milton what we know is only sufficient to make us regret that we know no more—a regret increased by the reflection, that his life was as lofty as his genius, and that his conversation seems to have been as rich as his poetry.

It shall be our endeavour in the pages that follow to condense in brief compass the leading facts known of the great author of Paradise Lost, interposing a few occasional comments, and reserving for the next volume our fuller views on his poetry and genius.

John Milton was the son of John and Sarah Milton, and was born in London on the 9th of December 1608. His father was a scrivener to trade, and lived at the sign of the Spread Eagle in Bread Street—a street lying—in what is called technically the City—under the shadow of St Paul's. He had in his youth attended Christ Church, Oxford, where he was converted to the Protestant faith, and abjured publicly the errors of Popery, for which his father, a bigoted Papist, disinherited him. The student was thus compelled to enter on the profession mentioned above, and prospered in it to such a degree, as to be able to give his children a liberal education, and to secure a comfortable competence for his closing years, which were spent in the country. There can be little doubt that the hatred of Popery and arbitrary power which distinguished the illustrious son was instilled into him from childhood, and intensified by the recollection of his father's wrongs. His mother's name was Caston. She was of Welsh descent, and had perhaps some sparks of the wild poetical enthusiasm of the ancient Britons in her blood. Her son speaks of her worth and liberality to the poor, and praises his father for his love of letters and his sterling integrity of character. He possessed another artistic taste, which he transmitted to the poet. He was passionately fond of music, and as a composer ranked with the best of that age.

To the unspeakable privilege of two admirable parents was added that of a most careful and copious education. Milton was one of the few who have enjoyed the benefits both of private and public tuition. His first tutor was one Thomas Young, a genuine Roundhead from Essex, who, according to Aubrey, "cutt his hair short," who enjoyed afterwards the honour of banishment to Holland for his religion, but returned, and, during Cromwell's reign, was master of Jesus College, Cambridge. Young, though a Puritan, loved poetry,

and, according to Milton, taught his pupil to love it. He died in the year 1674. When approaching the age of fifteen, his tutor having gone abroad, Milton was removed to St Paul's school. There, under the care of Alexander Gill the master, and his son the usher of the school, he appears to have profited much in learning. Even then he was a hard student, seldom quitting his books till midnight, and frequent headaches gave, in vain, warning of the disease which was ultimately to quench his eyes in darkness. His favourite reading was in books of poetry, among which are particularly mentioned, Sylvester's *Du Bartas* (a vast curious medley of sense and nonsense, childish platitudes and genuine poetry, quaint pedantry and profound learning) and Spenser. It was Spenser, too, we remember with interest, who first awakened the muse of Cowley.

The season of an author's life in which love for books prompts to imitation of their beauties, and the yearning admiration and despair with which the student leans over the burning page of genius are exchanged for lively, hopeful, and determined emulation of its wonders, is always profoundly interesting and instructive, whether it occur late in life, as in the case of Dryden, or early, as in that of Pope and Milton. If the latter could hardly be said to "lisp the numbers," he was certainly a boy-poet. In 1623, while still fifteen, he paraphrased the 114th and 136th Psalms, productions which, amid much that is imperfect and juvenile, discover the ascendancy the Hebrew genius had already acquired over his mind, and something of that unequalled command of poetical language —that knowledge of the magic of words—which distinguished him in after days. Take the following specimen:—

> "He with his thunder-clasping hand
> Smote the first-born of Egypt land;
> And in despite of Pharaoh fell
> He brought from thence his Israël.
> The ruddy waves he cleft in twain
> Of the Erythraean main:
> The flood stood still, like walls of glass,
> While the Hebrew bands did pass:
> But full soon they did devour
> The *tawny* king with all his power."

Two years later, he wrote his quaint but ingenious poem on the "Death of a Fair Infant, Dying of a Cough," said to be his niece, daughter of his sister Phillipps. Previous to this, in February 1624, he was sent from St Paul's school to Christ's College, Cambridge. There he seems at first to have been treated with considerable severity, but soon attracted attention by his diligence, his scholarship, and the exquisite Latin and English exercises he produced. At college, too, he wrote his "Sonnet on Shakspere," and his magnificent "Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," which alone might have preserved his name, and which seems, more than any of his earlier poems, a miniature of *Paradise Lost*, in all its leading qualities of religious feeling, solemn grandeur of conception, slow and majestic movement of verse, massive strength of diction, language that "may be felt," and the inimitable management of mythological and classic images.

From Christ's College he was, as all acquainted with his history know, rusticated. There is less evidence for the common story that he was whipped by his tutor for contumacy, although it is affirmed by Aubrey. Certain it is that, like many men of genius, he seems to have derived little benefit from his University, and to have cherished little affection for it. He took, however, the ordinary degree of M.A.; and then, in 1632, we see him, with a proud full heart, and having shaken the dust off his feet, leaving Cambridge for the country, to return to its inglorious shades no more.

His father had meanwhile retired from business, and settled in Horton, near Colnebrooke, Buckinghamshire. To his seat the rusticated poet repaired, and remained there from 1632 to 1638, or from his twenty-fourth to his thirtieth year. This seems to us one of the most interesting portions of his life. He had ample leisure for study, and used it in laying up those vast stores of recondite learning which were commensurate with his genius, and on which that genius was afterwards to feed, free and unbounded, as a fire feeds upon a mighty forest. The country around is rich and beautiful, in the *English* sense of that word; and Milton in his solitary walks gathered materials for his descriptions of nature, and we find the groves

and fields of Buckinghamshire reproduced not only in the scenery of "L'Allegro" and "Lycidas," but in his pictures of the arbours of Eden and the valleys of Heaven. His family circle was not numerous, but it was select, consisting of his father and mother, a married sister older than himself, and a younger brother engaged in the study of the law. By living in the country he was enabled with greater ease to preserve entire his personal purity and his temperate and devotional habits. His amusements consisted principally of botanising excursions through the neighbouring country, of musical entertainments, and of occasional visits to London for books, lessons in mathematics, and the like. Here, doubtless, passages of early love occurred, which tended still more to fan his poetic fire, although no trace of their particulars can now be discovered. He seems to have occasionally visited the accomplished Countess Dowager of Derby, residing in Harefield Place, hard by Horton, whose grandchildren performed the "Arcades." According to some accounts, he at this time, in the course of visits to the beautiful village of Foresthill, near Oxford, met with Mary Powell, daughter of Squire Powell, and destined to become his wife. Here, certainly, he wrote those beautiful minor poems, "L'Allegro," "Penseroso," "Arcades," "Lycidas," and "Comus," which themselves constitute a claim to a reputation at least as great as Tasso's or Wordsworth's, even although "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" had never appeared. "Comus" was written for his father's landlord, the Earl of Bridgewater, and enacted in 1634 at his lordship's residence of Castle Ludlow.

In 1637 his mother died, and Milton prevailed on his father to permit him to visit the Continent. Probably he found his sphere at Horton but too comfortable and contracted for his expanding genius, and it might be that one of those sudden longings for travel which often cross the souls of the solitary had come irresistibly over his. Like Keats, he felt that "happy was England, sweet her artless daughters," but felt, too, a strong desire to see "beauties of deeper glance," and to

"Sit upon an Alp as on a throne."

He wished, besides, to visit Italy for the sake of its music, and designed to form a collection of it whilst there. Having obtained directions as to his travels from Sir Henry Wotton, to whom he had communicated his purpose, he set out in 1638, attended by a single servant. We remember few finer subjects for contemplation or picture than that of Milton in the prime of his life—with youth and manhood mingling on his brow—with his long auburn hair—with his beautiful Grecian face—with a mild majestic enthusiasm glowing in his eyes—with cheek tenderly flushed by exercise and country air—with a form erect and buoyant with hope—with a body and soul pure and uncontaminated—and bearing, like one of the ancient gods, a musical instrument in his hand, leaving the Horton solitude upon his travels to the lands of romance and poetry. How different from the spectacle presented nearly two centuries afterwards, of Byron, soured, satiated, old in passion and misery, although younger than Milton in years, setting out on his journey in search of oblivion! The one seemed a monstrous mixture of Apollo the beautiful, and Vulcan the vicious and lame; the other the very god of poesy himself, as when he kept the flocks of Admetus, or tuned his lute—

"Sole sitting on the shores of old Romance."

He went first to Paris, where he remained a few days, and was, through Lord Scudamore, introduced to Grotius, then the Swedish ambassador to France, and in his fifty-sixth year. The interview between the young poet and the mature scholar must have been interesting. Milton could appreciate the learning of Grotius, and probably liked him none the less for his Arminianism. Grotius, as his metrical translations from the Greek prove, was far from destitute of poetical feeling, and must have loved the ingenuous and high-minded Englishman. Indeed, Milton's nephew tells us that he took the visit kindly, and gave him entertainment suitable to his worth, and to the high commendations he had heard of him. From Paris he went to Nice, and thence to Genoa, and thence to Florence, where he stayed for two months. He was received with the highest honours by the literati of that city, and became a

welcome guest at their "academies," as the reunions of the learned were then termed. We can conceive the rapture with which he felt himself in the city of Dante, perused the masterpieces of Italian art, gazed on the beautiful environs of the city, and, above all, mingled for the first time, to any full measure, in the society of men of kindred tastes and feelings. Of these, Dati wrote a Latin eulogy on him, and Francini an Italian ode in his praise, and Malatesti dedicated to him one of his works. At this time, too, occurred his celebrated interview with Galileo, then in the dungeons of the Inquisition; surely another theme for the noblest pencil—the meeting of Italy's old savan and England's young genius,—the gray-haired sage, each wrinkle on his forehead the furrow of a star, and the "Lady of his College," with his long curling locks, and a dream of Eden sleeping on his smooth brow; while the dim twilight of the cell, spotted by the fierce eyes of the officials, seemed the age too late or too early on which both had fallen—a meeting like that of Morning with her one star, and day in the distance, and of Midnight, with all her melancholy maturity and host of diminished suns.

From Florence he went by way of Sienna to Rome, where other and yet rarer thrills of delight awaited him. Although few if any allusions to the works of Italian statuary, painting, or architecture occur in his writings; and although some of his commentators have in vain sought to find traces of resemblance between some great Italian pictures and certain scenes in his "Paradise Lost," there can be no doubt that a mind so susceptible as his, drank in influence and inspiration from the sculptures, the paintings, and buildings of the Eternal City, from the dome of St Peter's seen by morning light, and from the ruins of Mount Palatine dim-discovered in the midnight moon. Michael Angelo, like Dante, was of a genius kindred to Milton's own—stern, lofty, ever covered by the shadow of the Infinite; and it were treason against both to suppose that the one was not enchanted by the productions of the other. At Rome, as at Florence, he was treated with the utmost consideration, particularly by Holstenius, the keeper of the Vatican library; by Cardinal Barberini, the patron cardinal of the

English; and by Salvaggi and Salsilli, who praised his powers and learning in verses which were afterwards prefixed to his Latin poems.

From Rome, after two months' stay, he proceeded to Naples in the company of a religious recluse, who introduced him to John Baptista Manso, the Marquis of Villa. This eminent person had been the patron of Tasso, and received with open arms a far greater than he. Such were his attentions to Milton that, in gratitude, on his departure from Naples, he presented him with his elegant eclogue entitled "Mansus," a poem well calculated, by even Dr Johnson's confession, to raise in the noble Italian a very high opinion of English taste and literature. Manso, in his turn, addressed a complimentary distich to Milton. From Naples he intended to have proceeded to Sicily and Greece. How he must have regretted, and how much we also may, that he had not fulfilled his intention—not seen with that anointed and anointing eye of his—

"Etna's fires grow dim before the rising day"—

the vale of Tempe, the pastures of Peneus, the heights of Parnassus, the unmelted snows of Olympus, the gray plain of Marathon, and the marvellous combination of natural and artistic beauties which gathers round the city of Athens; nay, that he had not extended his tour eastwards to those awful lands which must far oftener have visited his dreams, where Siloa's brook still flows, where Olivet still looks down on the Holy City, and the scathed summits of Sinai tower into the torrid air as boldly as on that morning when the Ancient of Days descended on them! But he had heard of the great controversy which was raging in his native country, and this drew him back from what had been the cherished purpose of his soul. "I thought it base," he says, "to be travelling for amusement abroad while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home." And with probably a few natural sighs and wistful looks cast to the east, he turned his steps and went back to Rome. His language, while in that city before, on the subject of religion, had been fearless and outspoken. This had made him enemies, and had restrained the kindness of

friends. He was now warned that the Jesuits were framing plots against him, and that if he would escape their malice he must "keep his thoughts close and his countenance open." Such warnings and advices he did not regard, but continued two more months in Rome, and altered in no whit either his conduct or his language. From Rome he proceeded again to Florence, and then visited Lucca. He next crossed the Apennines, and went by Bologna and Ferrara to Venice, in which city he spent a month; thence he took his course through Verona, Milan, and along the lake Leman, to Geneva. In this part of his journey he, of course, saw the Alps; and the eye of Milton, looking at the dome of Mont Blanc, must itself have been a sight. After spending some time in Geneva, where he became intimate with Deodati and Spanheim, he returned through France, and arrived at home after fifteen months' absence. During that time, the scenery and manners with which he came in contact were silently and unalterably daguerreotyping themselves upon his mind; but it is even more important to observe that, according to his own express and solemn statement, he came back as he had gone out, a virgin, free of all taint from the licentious lands he had traversed. Art alone could not thus have preserved her votary, however ardent and sincere—Religion only could.

Returned to London, he hired a lodging in St Bride's Churchyard, Fleet Street, and undertook the education of his sister's sons, John and Edward Phillipps, the first ten, the other nine years of age; and in a year's time made them capable of interpreting a Latin author at sight! From Fleet Street, finding his house not large enough, he passed to Aldersgate Street, where he took a commodious and handsome house, situated at the end of an entry, and in a garden, and received a few more pupils besides his nephews. It has been objected to him that, instead of taking public part in the grand struggle of the age, he should have sunk down into a schoolmaster. Milton was himself the best judge. He felt that he could serve the popular cause better by his pen than by his sword. He sate calmly down, therefore, to WRITE down every species of arbitrary power, and supported himself

honourably the while by teaching a school. In this we see no disgrace and no cowardice; but, on the contrary, recognise in it the conduct of a man as brave and honest as he was wise.

The mode of education he established was strict and peculiar. Occasionally, however, he relaxed in the hard study and spare diet which he had allotted to his pupils and himself; and spent with them a general day of harmless enjoyment in the country. In 1641, he published his *Treatise on Reformation*, in two books, strongly and eloquently defending the Puritanic side. He was moved to this the more, that he knew that the Puritans were inferior in learning to their opponents. His opinions on the controverted questions had been made up long before. The accession of such a man to the party of the movement, was of the utmost importance. Its other writers had courage, determination, and talent; but Milton and Howe alone had genius; and Milton had, what Howe wanted, the ear of Europe and an imperial command over the purest Latinity, to which only that ear was then willing to hearken. This treatise, indeed, was in English, but contained some of the most magnificent passages of prose in the language—passages, according to Coleridge, as distinctly prophetic of the "Paradise Lost," as the red clouds of dawn are of the rising of the sun. In the same year, he issued, in reply to Bishop Usher's *Confutation of Smectymnuus*, a treatise of Prelatical Episcopacy. Usher, that "great luminary of the Irish Church," as Dr Johnson calls him, had at last met his match, not perhaps to the full in learning, but certainly in fervid sincerity, acute intellect, and powerful eloquence. One is reminded of Milton's own—

> "Two black clouds
> With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
> Over the Caspian, then stand front to front
> Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow,
> To join their dark encounter in mid-air."

We cannot add, however, in this case, although Johnson does in another, that "Hell grew darker at their frown." Milton treats Usher, on the whole, respectfully, and compliments him on his learning, in his next publication. That was the *Reason*

of Church Government urged against Prelacy, and it was followed by *Animadversions on Bishop Hall's Defence of the Humble Remonstrance.* In the former occurs the celebrated passage in which he announces his intention of writing a Heroic Poem, "not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amorist, or the trencher fury of a riming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters; but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." He finally closed this controversy with an Apology for Smectymnuus, confessing ingenuously, however, that he was "led by the genial power of nature to another task;" and that in this he had but the "use, as it were, of his left hand." He panted for beholding the "bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies," and had yet long enough to pant.

Hitherto, Milton had remained alone—and his life, on the whole, had been a monologue. He was now to enter upon the married state. About Whitsuntide 1643, when he had reached his thirty-fifth year, he, to use the words of his nephew, Phillipps, "took a journey into the country, nobody about him certainly knowing the reason, or that it was more than a journey of recreation, till after a month's stay, home he returns a married man, that went out a bachelor." His bride was Mary, the eldest daughter of Mr Powell, formerly mentioned as a squire residing at Forest Hill. Hastily got up, this match turned out miserably ill; contradicting for once the common notion that marriages made in middle life are the happiest. His wife seems to have been a gay, commonplace girl, fond of dancing and other trifling amusements—in short, the last person fitted to be the companion of an austere and lofty-souled scholar like Milton. At the end of a month, wearied with the monotony of his life, terrified at the statuesque precision of his habits and character, and sighing after the parties and pleasures of the gay corner from which she came, under pretext of a visit to her friends, she

left him, and when asked to return at the time appointed, positively refused. He sent letter after letter to induce her to alter her resolution,—they were returned unopened; he even despatched a messenger,—he was dismissed from her father's house with contempt. His grief and surprise were soon changed into fury; he determined to repudiate her, and proceeded to justify the step by writing four treatises, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce; The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce; Tetrachordon;* and *Colasterion.* Without defending the loose and dangerous doctrines advocated in these treatises, we must say that Milton's conduct admits of more excuse than that of other celebrated men who have been in a similar domestic predicament. Coleridge's irregularities would have tried the patience of any woman that ever lived. Shelley married too young, and it was not much wonder that such "calf-love" did not continue. Byron seems to have behaved badly, if not brutally, to his lady, and was, we fear, unfaithful ere the one year of their connexion had elapsed. But Milton's wife had nothing to complain of except his austere manners and life, and of these she might have been aware before the marriage. "Hearing his nephews cry sometimes under his severe discipline" is the only fact alleged in her excuse. The truth simply is, they were uncongenial, and had, in the mysterious providence of God, met for mutual misery. But it had been braver and nobler, and in the long run better far for both, had they submitted in silence, instead of kicking against what was their fixed and forefated lot. His principal defence is, that she was the aggressor.

These treatises, new in doctrine, uncompromising in spirit, and bold in language, could not fail of attracting attention, and of exciting controversy. Many sneered at them; some replied in print; others attacked them from the pulpit; and a few rallied around them, who gained the name of Divorcists or Miltonists. It was unfortunate for their effect that they so manifestly sprung from the bitterness of personal disappointment. The fox had lost his tail, and must persuade all future foxes to claim the liberty of cutting off theirs when-

ever they chose! The Presbyterians were especially inimical to his views. They had him summoned before the House of Lords, by whom, however, he was speedily dismissed; and one of their leading clergy, Herbert Palmer, abused his book in the bitterest terms. These facts seem to have determined the balance of Milton's mind against Presbyterianism and in favour of the Independent party. Meanwhile, he was carrying out the principles of his work, by paying his addresses to the daughter of Dr Davis, described as a lady of great beauty and intelligence. He had apparently not heard the Scottish proverb, "It is best to be off with the old love, before you are on with the new." A short time afterwards, he was startlingly reminded of its truth.

Although agonised and almost "driven to atheism" by this distressing event, his mind continued as active and powerful as ever. In 1644, he published his *Tractate on Education*, developing a plan of training rather Utopian, and which seems scarcely worth being realised. Any student subjected to it would have turned out a curious mixture; one-third farmer, one-third pedant, and one-third poet. In the same year, Milton wrote a far nobler production; indeed, his grandest in prose, *The Areopagitica; a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*. The most elaborate speeches or treatises of the ancients, the Philippics of Demosthenes and the orations of Cicero, seem but the discourses of Lilliput compared to this. It had suited an audience of "giant angels" better than even that stately senate to which it was addressed. It is almost entirely free from the quaintness, stiffness, and involution which mark his ordinary prose-style, and rises more easily into its altitudes. It is as "thunder mingled with clear echoes;" and amid all its merits, its strong argument, its sounding-march, the "deep organ-tone" of its diction, there is nothing more remarkable about it than its sustained, cheerful, and majestic calmness. One wonders how it could be written by one so strangely widowed as its author had been, and is tempted to suspect that the bright eyes of Miss Davis had in part inspired it. Like almost all first-rate speeches, such as Burke's, and Fox's, and

Chatham's best, it failed in gaining its object, and would have failed even had Milton been permitted to read it in person to the Parliament. The Presbyterians when they got the press into their hands were as unfriendly to its unrestricted freedom as the Prelatists had been.

His father had now come to reside with him, and the number of his pupils increasing, he took a larger house. Before removing to it, he was astonished, upon one of his usual visits to a relation in St Martin's le Grand, to see his wife coming in from another room and beseeching forgiveness. A scene followed, at which some will be disposed to laugh, and others to cry. She fell on her knees, she bathed him with her tears, and he, overpowered by her solicitations, took her once more to his bosom. It was magnanimous conduct, although undoubtedly the scheme was pre-concerted on the part of her friends, who felt the declining state of the royal cause, who foresaw that Milton's star was soon to culminate, and had heard that he was paying his addresses to another lady. This sets, we think, their conduct in a very mean light, and reminds us of that of the Armour family, who persecuted poor Burns when "hungry ruin had him in the wind," but fawned on him, and made him welcome to visit Jean, after his triumphant return from Edinburgh. What became of Miss Davis we are not informed. The Poet removed soon after to Barbican, where he received, besides his wife, his pupils and his own father, his wife's father and mother, after they were impoverished by the success of the Roundheads. Todd has discovered some curious documents, which shew that Powell had been in debt to Milton's father, and that after his death, Milton, to reimburse himself, took possession of his mortgaged property, and so Powell's widow and eight children were left destitute. This is not a story much to Milton's credit, and constitutes, in fact, the one *small* thing recorded against him. But we are not acquainted with all the circumstances. In 1646-7, Powell died a broken-hearted bankrupt; and soon after, Milton's own father expired. Before this, he had published, for the first time in a collected form, his juvenile poems in Latin and English.

In 1647, his family circle having been lessened by the death of his father and father-in-law, and by the departure of widow Powell and her family, he took a smaller dwelling in Holborn, opening backward into Lincoln's Inn Fields, and continued to instruct a few scholars. From this date till the death of Charles I. his pen seems to have remained idle, with the exception of turning into English verse a few of the Psalms, sooth to say, with no great success. If Milton failed, can we wonder that no one else has fully succeeded in translating these divine lyrics?

On the 30th of January 1648-9, Divine Right, in the person of Charles I., was publicly put to death before Whitehall, and the blow "resounded through the universe!" Thousands awoke at the sound—many to scream out contradiction and rage—many to shed bitter tears, and many to express a faint and faltering approbation. Milton belonged to none of these classes, but dared to echo the falling axe, and to cry aloud, "It is the judgment of God." He published a treatise entitled the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, in which he elaborately shews "that it is lawful, and hath been held so through all ages, for any who have the power to call to account a tyrant or wicked king." This strong and seasonable argument, from the most powerful pen then extant, led to important advantages. Grateful for his aid, the government appointed him their Latin secretary, with a salary of £288 a-year. "As Latin secretary," says an able writer, "his duties were multifarious and somewhat onerous. As it had been resolved that all the government correspondence with foreign princes and states should be in Latin, he had daily to attend at Whitehall to lend his services as a compiler and translator. A collection of the letters written by him in this capacity, both for the Council of State and for Cromwell, is published among his prose works. But, besides these strictly official duties, others naturally devolved upon him in consequence of his general literary abilities." To this class belong his *Critical Observations on the Articles of Peace between the Earl of Ormond and the Irish Rebels*—his *Eiconoclastes*, written in reply to the famous *Eicon Basilike*, the supposed production of Charles I.,

and his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*, an answer to the Latin *Defence of Charles I.*, produced by Salmasius, a Frenchman, and reputed one of the best scholars in Europe.

Of these, the first two were published in 1649, and the last in 1651. All made more or less a profound sensation, and were in different measures distinguished by the same qualities —profuse learning—scholastic subtlety—eloquence of a rich and massive but involved and intricate texture—decision of tone, amounting to dogmatism and defiance—a fierce contemptuous bitterness to his opponents—passages of almost superhuman dignity and splendour, alternating with bad jokes, word-playings, and the vilest of all possible puns. On the whole, when he became a controversialist, if not weak as other men, his stature, like that of his own angels ere entering the halls of Pandemonium, was dwarfed and dwindled. Two passages from his *Defensio* are worthy of all admiration—those, namely, describing Cromwell and Bradshaw, pictures which reduce to mere daubs all the sketches of character produced before or since from Plutarch to Lord Brougham.

Salmasius answered Milton's attack by an assault on his private character. Indeed, the personalities on both sides were atrocious and disgusting, as was the manner of that age. Peter de Moulin also replied to the *Defensio pro Populo*, and provoked a rejoinder still fiercer from Milton's pen, entitled *Defensio Secunda*. Salmasius shortly after died, according to some, broken-hearted, owing to the neglect he experienced after Milton's book appeared. For several years thereafter he was principally occupied in his official duties; and having given up his pupils, and finding his health somewhat impaired, he removed to Scotland Yard, and thence to Garden House in Westminster, where he continued till near the time of the Restoration. In 1652, a calamity which had long impended over at last came down on him—we allude to his blindness. This had been slowly gaining on him, and the labours connected with the Salmasian controversy brought it to a point. Of course, there were many to cry out, a "judgment," and to dream that it was a drop of the king's blood which had quenched his eyes! Milton has written more than one noble

complaint over his completed blindness. We could have conceived him penning an expostulation to the advancing shadow, equally sublime and equally vain, for it was God's pleasure that this great spirit should, like himself, dwell for a season in the thick darkness. The same year his wife died in childbed, leaving him alone, blind, and with the care of three infant daughters, the oldest of whom was not more than six years of age. But he was only forty-four—his circumstances were comfortable—his resolution was unconquerable, and he girded himself up to mate with and overcome his difficulties. Mr Philip Meadowes was appointed to assist him in his secretaryship, and yet his salary was not at first diminished. He was married, in the year 1656, a second time. His wife was the daughter of Captain Woodcock of Hackney. This marriage was very happy, but of short continuance. She, too, died in childbirth, within a year after marriage, and her memory lives in one of his sweetest sonnets. By and by his salary was reduced one-half, and his duties were divided, although his pen was ever ready to defend the government down almost to the date of the Restoration.

Relieved, first by the appointment of Meadowes, and then of the celebrated Andrew Marvel, as his colleague, he began to revolve certain vast literary projects, such as a Latin Thesaurus, a Body of Divinity out of the Bible, a History of his Native Country, and an EPICK POEM. For the Dictionary the preparations were begun, but left in a fragmentary state—the History was commenced after the "Paradise Lost" was finished —the System of Divinity was discovered, and published in 1825 —and the design of the Epick was built up into the sublimest production of the human mind. Meanwhile, in 1659, he published his *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, shewing that it is not lawful for any power on earth to compel in matters of religion; and, in the same year, *Considerations touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church;* a *Letter to a Friend concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth;* and a *Letter to General Monk on the Present Means of a Free Commonwealth.* In February, he gave to the world what he hoped might not contain the "last words of

expiring liberty," in a *Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth.*

These efforts to retard the Restoration were strong, but convulsive and ineffectual. Cromwell's genius was latterly the one bulwark against the return of Charles; he was now removed, and there was nothing for it but that the nation, "like a tame elephant, should kneel" and receive its worthless rider. The consequences to Milton were disastrous; he had sat for years at ease in his "garden-house," labouring, but not toiling, visited by friends such as Lawrence, Skinner, Needham, and Marvel; visited, too, by foreigners, many of whom came to England simply to see Cromwell and Milton—in the possession of competence, if not wealth—blind, but full of internal light, of celestial cheer, and with great projects passing across his mind, and causing his eyes, as they passed, to twinkle with joy. Now his secretaryship was lost, he was obliged to take refuge in a friend's house in Bartholomew Close; nay, according to some accounts, to give himself out for dead, and to have a mock funeral made for him. His *Eiconoclastes* and *Defensio* were burned by the hands of the common hangman. He was not relieved from danger till the act of indemnity was passed; and, even after that, he was a short time in the custody of the serjeant-at-arms. As we have elsewhere said, although the heat of persecution was abated, the prospects of Milton were aught but cheering. He was poor, blind, solitary—his second wife dead—his daughters undutiful, unkind, and anxious for his death—his country was enslaved—the hopes of the Church and the world seemed blasted—one might have expected that disappointment, regret, and vexation would have completed their work. It was the greatest crisis in the history of the individual man. Napoleon survived the loss of his empire, and men call him great because he survived it. Sir Walter Scott not only survived the loss of his fortune, but he struggled manfully amid the sympathy of the civilised species to repair it. But Milton, amid the loss of friends, fortune, fame, sight, domestic comfort, long cherished hopes, not only survived, but stood firm as a god over the ruins of a world—and not only stood firm, but,

alone and unaided, built to himself an everlasting monument. Verily, he was one of the celestial coursers who feed on no vulgar or earthly food. He had "meat to eat that the world knew not of."

As soon as he felt himself out of danger, he settled in Holborn, and then in Jewin Street, Aldersgate, and resumed his wonted studies. In 1664 he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, daughter of Sir Edward Minshull, in Cheshire. It was a "made-up match," she having been chosen at his request by his friend Dr Paget, to be the nurse of his declining years. Like his other two wives, she was a maiden. He had an aversion to marrying widows. His daughters, three in number, Anne, Mary, and Deborah, acted as his amanuenses till the period of their respective marriages. They were taught to read, without understanding, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, to their blind father. From this slavery it is not to be wondered that they shrunk; but, besides, they are said to have combined with his maid-servant in cheating him, and to have pawned his books. On what terms he lived with his third wife is not quite certain. A little after his marriage, he is said to have been offered the Latin secretaryship again, but declined it. About this time commenced his intimacy with Ellwood the Quaker. This amiable and intelligent young man used to come every afternoon except that of Sunday, and to read Latin to him. Ellwood, though himself an object of persecution, found means to be serviceable to Milton. He had got a situation as tutor in the family of a rich Quaker in Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, and when the plague broke out in London in 1665, he hired there a house for the poet, who removed to Chalfont with all his family. When he arrived, he found Ellwood imprisoned in Aylesbury gaol on account of his religion. As soon, however, as he obtained his liberty, he paid Milton a visit, who put into his hands a MS., requesting him to read it, and give him his opinion. It was Paradise Lost! He had commenced this marvellous poem two years before the Restoration, and it had thus occupied him seven years—a time neither too long nor too short for the construction of such a piece of Cyclopean

masonry. His purpose of writing an epic had never been relinquished, and from harsh and crabbed controversies he returned gladly to poetry, like a wearied sea-bird to his nest. It was not composed, as might have been imagined, in slow and regular succession of effort, but at fits and snatches, the "spirit moving him at times," as it did of old his Danite hero. It is curious, that, though the most intensely cultivated of poets, he was most dependent on moods and moments; his favourite season was from the "autumnal to the vernal equinox." Now, he could only indite coarse and clumsy prose, and, anon, "flowed free his unpremeditated verse" in a "torrent rapture" of beauty, music, and power. The poem, though completed and approved of by Ellwood, was nearly stifled in its cradle by the licenser, who detected treason in that noble simile of the eclipse—

"With fear of change perplexing monarchs."

Perhaps, also, he felt some little spite to the author of the *Areopagitica*, who had treated his tribe with such crushing contempt. At length, however, licensed the poem was, and Milton sold his copy, April 27, 1667, to Samuel Symmons, for an immediate payment of five pounds—an agreement with the bookseller, however, entitling him to a conditional payment of five pounds more when thirteen hundred copies should be sold of the first edition; of the same sum after the same number of the second edition; and of another five pounds after the same sale of the third; the number of each edition was not to exceed fifteen hundred copies. It appeared in a small quarto form, in ten books, and was sold for three shillings. We have seen this first edition as well as the third, and, humble as they were in binding, they seemed to our eyes covered all over, like a summer's sunset, with glory. In two years the sale gave the author a right to his second instalment. The second edition appeared in 1647, and was arranged into twelve books. Milton lived not to receive the price stipulated for this impression. The third edition was published in 1678, and, on the receipt of eight pounds, the widow of the poet gave it over entire to Symmons, who sold it for twenty-five pounds to Aylmer, and

from him it passed into Jacob Tonson's hands. It is singular, contrasting this "goodly price" at which the greatest of English poems was prized, with the large sums which have been paid since for Marmions, and Lalla Rookhs, and Childe Harolds, or even with the experiences of our own day, in which, a month or two ago, a young author sold his first poem for one hundred pounds. But readers were then scarce, poetry was still more than now a drug; Milton's name had become odious from his principles, and he seems to have never complained of his bargain. He saw, shall we say, those poor five bank-notes fluttering in the breath of eternal fame? He cast his book upon the waters, knowing that it would be found after many days.

Slowly and surely it made its way. First Barrow and Marvel prefixed complimentary verses to the second edition, then Dryden wrote his celebrated hexastich, beginning,

"Three poets in three distant ages born," &c.

which accompanies the fourth, besides praising it in the preface to his "State of Innocence" as "one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced." Woodford, Lord Roscommon, Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, and Bishop Atterbury, followed in diversified measures of praise; and even before Addison wrote his long analysis of it in the *Spectator*, its character and fame were established on an indestructible basis.

We must not omit the numerous prose works he wrote before or after the "Paradise Lost." These were his *Accidence or Commenced Grammar of the Latin Tongue*, published in 1661; a *History of Britain to the Norman Conquest*, in 1670; a tract published in 1673, entitled, *Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and what best Means may be used against the Growth of Popery*—a Latin treatise on logic—a collection of his familiar epistles in Latin—a brief History of Muscovy and the countries beyond Russia, which was left by him in MS., besides the materials for his Thesaurus, and his treatise on Christian Doctrine. One is utterly amazed at the industry, the determination, the energy, the power of mind and memory, the almost miraculous

concentration, as well as the multiformity of nature which these works evince. He seems one of his own angels, now talking familiarly to Adam, and now plucking up, and tossing to and fro, the rooted hills of heaven. "Truly," says Johnson, "he was born for whatever was arduous, and difficulties vanished at his touch."

After the plague was over, and the city cleansed, Milton had returned to Banhillfields. Ere leaving Chalfont, he had commenced, at Ellwood's suggestion (who had playfully asked him, since he had sung Paradise Lost so well, to give the world something on Paradise Found), and finished "Paradise Regained." To this, on returning to town, he added "Samson Agonistes," and published them both in one volume in 1671. That Milton preferred "Paradise Regained" to the larger work has often been asserted, but is not true. According to Phillipps, he merely expressed his mortification at finding it treated as so much inferior to the "Paradise Lost." At this feeling few will now be astonished. That the "Paradise Regained" is not so long as the other is, of course, admitted. Its plan did not permit such lofty and daring flights; but in Homeric simplicity, in sustained dignity, in calmness of spirit, and nice beauty of image and language, it is superior, and may rank as the Odyssey of his genius. More of this, however, afterwards.

But the time was now come when this great spirit was to put off this tabernacle, and join his starry kindred in those regions calm, of mild and serene air, where his imagination and heart had long taken up their permanent abode. The "Lord had shut him in" in his darkened framework, as Noah in the ark of old; but he was now to open the ark and let him forth free, and free for ever. His disease was gout, attended with a general decay of the vital powers. Feeling himself near his end, he sent for his brother Christopher, then a bencher in the Inner Temple, to aid him in making his will. In fine keeping his death took place, amid the stillness and solemn pause of a Sabbath-day. This was the 8th of November 1674. It was a quiet and Godlike dismissal. There were attendants in the room, but they did not notice the moment of his expiration, it was so easy. Milton died, as he had lived, *alone.*

It is with a certain severe satisfaction that we contemplate the death of such a man. We feel that tears and lamentations were here unbecoming, and would mar the solemn sweetness of the scene. With serenity—nay, joy—we witness this majestic manchild caught up to God and to his throne. Were we to behold a star re-absorbed into its source, melted down in God, would it not generate a delight, graver, indeed, but as real, as had we stood by its creation? and although there were no shouting as on its natal morn, might there not be silence, the silence of joyous wonder, among the sons of God? Thus died Milton, the prince of modern men. He accepted death as gently and complacently as the sky receives into its arms the waning moon.

His remains were followed to the grave by "all his learned and great friends in London, not without a friendly concourse of the vulgar." He was buried next his father in the chancel of St Giles, Cripplegate. The stone laid at first on his grave was speedily removed, and no monument was raised over his dust till 1793, when a marble bust from Bacon's chisel was, at the instance of Mr Whitbread, erected in the middle aisle of the church. Fifty-six years previous, Benson had procured the admission of his bust into Westminster Abbey. But what need of busts or monuments, any more than of degrees or titles, to him? The plain name, John Milton, more securely preserves his memory,

"Than if a pyramid formed his monumental fane."

This part of our task is now nearly done. The personal appearance, habits, and manners of the great Poet, are too familiar to require lengthened remark. He was of the middle size, neither lean nor corpulent, his skin fresh and fair, his eyes gray, his features regular, his hair light-brown, parted at the fore-top, and hanging in curls upon his shoulders. In his food and liquor he was not an anchorite, but extremely temperate, his rule being, *Not too much.* His days were regulated by an exact and severe system. He was in conversation affable and easy, although his temper was severe, and he was a "good hater." His favourite enjoyment was music, and his favourite

instrument the organ. His life, even in youth, and in the countries of the south, was entirely unstained by sensual impurities. His literature was enormous. The languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish, hung like keys from his girdle, and he had employed them to unlock all the treasures they commanded. His favourite book was the Bible in the original, and next to it, Homer and Euripides in Greek, Ovid in Latin, Dante in Italian, and Spenser, Shakspere, and Cowley in English. Liberty and religion were the two master passions of his soul, although his views of the former were rather ultra, even for our age, and although in theology he was very far from what is called orthodox, being a Millennarian, an Arminian, an Anti-sabbatarian, and verging on Arianism. His personal piety has never been questioned. It was not obtrusive nor unctuous, and would not tell in our "religious obituaries," but was manly, enlightened, sincere, and fervid.

And yet Milton does not seem to have been a happy man. Domestic infelicities, public affairs, and personal neglect, seem latterly to have made him sour, though never savage. In fact, this earth was a sphere too narrow for him. He was "before all ages." Space was his only fitting abode, and eternity his only adequate day. And when we look at him and the other men of his time, we are tempted to say, "There were giants in those days," while we have fallen on the days of little men; nay, to cry out with her of old, "I saw *gods* ascending from the earth, and one of them is like to an *old man, whose face is covered with a mantle.*"

PARADISE LOST.

THE VERSE.

THE measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre; graced, indeed, since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial, and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect, then, of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it is rather to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem, from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.

PARADISE LOST.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

The First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject—Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of heaven, with all his crew, into the great deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastens into the midst of things, presenting Satan, with his angels, now fallen into hell, described here, not in the centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos: here Satan, with his angels, lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise; their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world, and a new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in heaven; for, that angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises suddenly, built out of the deep: the infernal peers there sit in council.

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top

Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the Heavens and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's[1] brook that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhime.

And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark,
Illumine: what is low, raise and support;
That to the highth of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first, for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell; say first, what cause
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favour'd of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirr'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels; by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,

[1] 'Siloa:' a small brook flowing near the Temple of Jerusalem.

He trusted to have equall'd the Most High,
If he oppos'd; and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven, and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal: But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness, and lasting pain,
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay
Mix'd with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
At once, as far as Angels' ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible on all sides round,
As one great furnace flam'd; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordain'd
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of Heaven,

As from the center thrice to the utmost pole.
O how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelm'd
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns; and weltering by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beëlzebub.[1] To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:
If thou beest he; but O, how fallen! how chang'd
From him, who, in the happy realms of light,
Cloth'd with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads though bright! If he, whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Join'd with me once, now misery hath join'd
In equal ruin! Into what pit thou seest,
From what highth fallen; so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
Though chang'd in outward lustre, that fix'd mind,
And high disdain, from sense of injur'd merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,

[1] 'Beëlzebub:' see 2 Kings i. 2.

And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And, what is else, not to be overcome;
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
Who, from the terrour of this arm so late
Doubted his empire; that were low indeed,
That were an ignominy, and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of gods
And this empyreal substance cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage, by force or guile, eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and, in the excess of joy
Sole reigning, holds the tyranny of heaven.
So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but rack'd with deep despair:
And him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer.
O Prince! O Chief of many throned Powers,
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endanger'd Heaven's perpetual King,
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate;
Too well I see and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow, and foul defeat,
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as gods and heavenly essences
Can perish; for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns,

Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallow'd up in endless misery.
But what if He our Conquerour (whom I now
Of force believe Almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpower'd such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service, as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be,
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy deep;
What can it then avail, though yet we feel
Strength undiminish'd, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?
Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend replied.
Fallen Cherub! to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recall'd
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown, hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice
Of Heaven receiv'd us falling; and the thunder,

Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury, yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of Desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
And, reassembling our afflicted Powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our Enemy; our own loss how repair;
How overcome this dire calamity;
What re-enforcement we may gain from hope;
If not, what resolution from despair.
Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blaz'd; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove;
Briareos or Typhon,[1] whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held; or that sea-beast
Leviathan,[2] which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:
Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam
The pilot of some small night-founder'd skiff
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind

[1] 'Briareos or Typhon:' two mythological monsters commemorated in Ovid.—[2] 'Leviathan:' Milton means evidently the whale.

Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays:
So stretch'd out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
Chain'd on the burning lake: nor ever thence
Had risen, or heav'd his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs;
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others; and, enrag'd, might see
How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown
On Man by him seduced; but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance, pour'd.
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driven backward, slope their pointing spires, and roll'd
In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
He lights, if it were land that ever burn'd
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire:
And such appear'd in hue, as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus,[1] or the shatter'd side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuell'd entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds
And leave a singed bottom all involved
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him follow'd his next mate;

[1] 'Pelorus:' one of the three great promontories of Sicily, now Cape Faro, near Etna.

Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian flood
As gods, and by their own recover'd strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal Power.
Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
Said then the lost Arch-Angel, this the seat
That we must change for Heaven; this mournful gloom,
For that celestial light? Be it so! since he,
Who now is Sovran, can dispose, and bid
What shall be right: farthest from Him is best,
Whom reason hath equall'd, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrours! hail,
Infernal world! And thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessour!—one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time:
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be—all but less than He
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure, and, in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven!
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and copartners of our loss,
Lie thus astonish'd on the oblivious pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion; or once more,
With rallied arms, to try what may be yet
Regain'd in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?
So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
Thus answer'd. Leader of those armies bright,

Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foil'd! 273
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it rag'd, in all assaults
Their surest signal, they will soon resume
New courage and revive; though now they lie
Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 280
As we erewhile, astounded and amaz'd;
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth.
He scarce had ceas'd, when the superiour Fiend
Was moving toward the shore: his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optick glass the Tuscan artist[1] views
At evening from the top of Fesolé,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, 290
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine,
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand,
He walk'd with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire:
Nathless he so endur'd, till on the beach
Of that inflamed sea he stood, and call'd 300
His legions, Angel forms, who lay intranc'd
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa,[2] where the Etrurian shades,
High over-arch'd, imbower; or scatter'd sedge

[1] 'Tuscan artist:' Galileo.—[2] 'Vallombrosa:' a beautiful wooded vale, eighteen miles from Florence.

Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion[1] arm'd
Hath vex'd the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris[2] and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot-wheels: so thick bestrown,
Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He call'd so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded!—Princes, potentates,
Warriours, the flower of heaven! once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits! or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here as in the vales of Heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conquerour? who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood,
With scatter'd arms and ensigns; till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!

They heard, and were abash'd, and up they sprung
Upon the wing; as when men, wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;

[1] 'Orion:' the warrior constellation, symbolizing storms.—[2] 'Busiris:' Pharaoh.

Yet to their General's voice they soon obey'd,
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son,[1] in Egypt's evil day,
Wav'd round the coast, upcall'd a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like night, and darken'd all the land of Nile:
So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain;
A multitude, like which the populous North
Pour'd never from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian sands.
Forthwith from every squadron and each band,
The heads and leaders thither haste, where stood
Their great Commander; Godlike shapes and forms
Excelling human; princely Dignities
And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones;
Though of their names in heavenly records now
Be no memorial; blotted out and ras'd
By their rebellion from the books of life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names; till wandering o'er the earth,
Through God's high sufferance, for the trial of man,
By falsities and lies, the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible

[1] 'Amram's son:' Moses.

Glory of him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorn'd
With gay religions, full of pomp and gold,
And Devils to adore for Deities:
Then were they known to men by various names,
And various idols through the Heathen world.

Say, Muse, their names then known; who first, who last,
Rous'd from the slumber, on that fiery couch,
At their great Emperour's call, as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.
The chief were those, who, from the pit of Hell
Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
Their seats long after next the seat of God,
Their altars by his altar; gods adored
Among the nations round; and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, thron'd
Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed
Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profan'd,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.

First, Moloch,[1] horrid king, besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard, that pass'd through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshipp'd in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon; nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build

[1] 'Moloch:' god of the Ammonites, by some supposed identical with the Mars of the Greeks.

His temple right against the temple of God
On that opprobrious hill; and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna call'd, the type of Hell.
Next Chemos,[1] the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flow'ry dale of Sibma clad with vines;
And Eleälé[2] to the Asphaltic pool:[3]
Peor[4] his other name, when he entic'd
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarg'd
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide; lust hard by hate;
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they, who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts[5]
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of Baälim and Ashtaroth; those male,
These feminine: For Spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure;
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condens'd, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aery purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook

[1] 'Chemos:' idol of Moabites.—[2] 'Aroer,' 'Nebo,' 'Hesebon,' 'Sibma,' 'Eleälé,' &c.; all cities of Moab.—[3] 'Asphaltic pool:' the Dead Sea, so called from the asphaltus or bitumen in it.—[4] 'Peor:' Baal Peor.—[5] 'The brook that parts:' the brook Besor.

Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
Bow'd down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Astoreth, whom the Phœnicians call'd
Astarte,[1] queen of Heaven, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain,[2] built
By that uxorious king, whose heart, though large,
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. Thammuz[3] came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties, all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis[4] from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat;
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eye survey'd the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopt off
In his own temple, on the grunsel edge,[5]
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his worshippers;
Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man

[1] 'Astarte:' the moon.—[2] 'Offensive mountain:' Mount of Olives.—[3] 'Thammuz:' or Adonis, god of the Syrians, fabled to die and revive each year.—[4] 'Adonis:' the name of a river rising in Lebanon.—[5] 'Grunsel edge:' edge of foot-post of his temple.

And downward fish: yet had his temple high
Rear'd in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him follow'd Rimmon,[1] whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also 'gainst the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gain'd a king;
Ahaz, his sottish conquerour, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage, and displace,
For one of Syrian mould, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquish'd. After these appear'd
A crew, who, under names of old renown,
Osiris, Isis, Orus,[2] and their train,
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abus'd
Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek
Their wandering gods disguis'd in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
The infection, when their borrow'd gold compos'd
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel, and in Dan,
Lik'ning his Maker to the grazed ox;
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he pass'd
From Egypt marching, equall'd with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
Belial came last, than whom a Spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself: to him no temple stood
Or altar smok'd; yet who more oft than he

[1] 'Rimmon:' god of Syrians.—[2] 'Orus:' son of Osiris and Isis. It was fabled that when the giants invaded heaven, the gods concealed themselves in Egypt in the forms of various animals.

In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who fill'd
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury, and outrage: And when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.
These were the prime in order and in might;
The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd,
The Ionian gods, of Javan's[1] issue; held
Gods, yet confess'd later than Heaven and Earth,[2]
Their boasted parents: Titan, Heaven's first-born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger Saturn; he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So Jove usurping reign'd: These first in Crete
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus, rul'd the middle air,
Their highest Heaven; or on the Delphian cliff
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Dorick land;[3] or who, with Saturn old,
Fled over Adria[4] to the Hesperian fields,[5]
And o'er the Celtick[6] roam'd the utmost isles.[7]
All these and more came flocking; but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appear'd

[1] 'Javan:' fourth son of Japhet; whence supposed to issue the gods of Greece. But an older race had preceded them.—[2] 'Heaven and Earth:' the Titans, &c. See Keats' *Hyperion*.—[3] 'Dorick land:' Greece.—[4] 'Adria:' the Adriatic.—[5] 'Hesperian fields:' Italy.—[6] 'Celtick:' regions inhabited by the Celts.—[7] 'Utmost isles:' Britain, Ireland, &c.

Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their Chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue: but he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently rais'd
Their fainting courage, and dispell'd their fears.
Then straight commands, that at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud, and clarions be uprear'd
His mighty standard: that proud honour claim'd
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall;
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd
The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor, streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich imblaz'd,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host upsent
A shout, that tore Hell's concave, and, beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appear'd, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable: Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders; such as rais'd
To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle; and, instead of rage,
Deliberate valour breath'd, firm and unmov'd
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage,
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase

Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain,
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force, with fixed thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes, that charm'd
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil: and now,
Advanc'd in view, they stand; a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriours old with order'd spear and shield;
Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
Had to impose: He through the armed files
Darts his experienc'd eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views; their order due;
Their visages and stature as of gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and hardening in his strength
Glories: for never, since created man,
Met such imbodied force, as nam'd with these
Could merit more than that small infantry[1]
Warr'd on by cranes; though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were join'd
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mix'd with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son[2]
Begirt with British and Armorick knights;
And all who since, baptiz'd or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Africk shore,
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.[3] Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess yet observ'd

[1] 'Small infantry:' Pygmies.—[2] 'Uther's son:' King Arthur.—[3] 'Aspramont,' 'Montalban,' 'Biserta,' 'Fontarabbia,' &c.; all places famous in romantic history, and chiefly for contests between Saracens and Christians.

Their dread Commander: He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had yet not lost
All its original brightness; nor appear'd
Less than Arch-Angel ruin'd, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun, new risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams; or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all, the Arch-Angel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd; and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather,
(Far other once beheld in bliss) condemn'd
For ever now to have their lot in pain;
Millions of spirits for his fault amerc'd
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory wither'd: as when Heaven's fire
Hath scath'd the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepar'd
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: Attention held them mute.
Thrice he assay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words, interwove with sighs, found out their way.

O Myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers

Matchless but with the Almighty! and that strife
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change
Hateful to utter: but what power of mind,
Foreseeing, or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have fear'd
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to reascend
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
If counsels different, or dangers shunn'd
By me, have lost our hopes. But he, who reigns
Monarch in Heaven, till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent, or custom; and his regal state
Put forth at full, but still his strength conceal'd,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own;
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war provok'd: our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not: that he no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heaven that he erelong
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the sons of Heaven:
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption; thither or elsewhere:

For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature: Peace is despair'd;
For who can think submission? War then, War,
Open or understood, must be resolv'd.

He spake: and, to confirm his words, out flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell: Highly they rag'd
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms,
Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belch'd fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf; undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallick ore,
The work of sulphur.[1] Thither, wing'd with speed,
A numerous brigad hasten'd: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe arm'd,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon[2] led them on;
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
From Heaven; for e'en in Heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught, divine or holy, else enjoy'd
In vision beatifick: by him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransack'd the center, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth,
For treasures, better hid. Soon had his crew

[1] 'The work of sulphur:' sulphur in ancient days was thought the genitrix of gold.—[2] 'Mammon:' the word is Syriac, and signifies riches.

Open'd into the hill a spacious wound,
And digg'd out ribs of gold. Let none admire
That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they with incessant toil
And hands innumerable scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepar'd,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wonderous art, founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scumm'd the bullion dross:
A third as soon had form'd within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook;
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon, out of the earth, a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Dorick pillars overlaid
With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice or freeze, with bossy sculptures graven
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon,
Nor great Alcairo, such magnificence
Equall'd in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Sérapis,[1] their gods; or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove

[1] 'Sérapis:' an Egyptian god.

In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fix'd her stately highth: and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the arched roof,
Pendent by subtle magick, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets,[1] fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring enter'd; and the work some praise,
And some the architect: his hand was known
In Heaven by many a tower'd structure high,
Where scepter'd Angels held their residence,
And sat as princes; whom the Supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unador'd
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian[2] land
Men called him Mulciber;[3] and how he fell
From Heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle: thus they relate,
Erring; for he with his rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught avail'd him now
To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he 'scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent
With his industrious crew to build in Hell.

Meanwhile, the winged heralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony

[1] 'Cressets:' beacon lights, which anciently had a cross on their top, and were called '*croisettes*.'—[2] 'Ausonian:' Italian.—[3] 'Mulciber:' Vulcan.

And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council, forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium; the high capital
Of Satan and his peers: their summons call'd
From every band and squared regiment,
By place or choice the worthiest; they anon,
With hundreds and with thousands, trooping came,
Attended: all access was throng'd; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a cover'd field, where champions bold
Wont ride in arm'd, and at the Soldan's[1] chair
Defied the best of Panim[2] chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarm'd both on the ground and in the air
Brush'd with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the sun with Taurus[3] rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters: they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubb'd with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state affairs. So thick the aery crowd
Swarm'd, and were straiten'd; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! They but now who seem'd
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that Pygmean race
Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon

[1] 'Soldan:' Sultan.—[2] 'Panim:' Pagan; referring to ancient single combats between the Christians and Saracens.—[3] 'Taurus:' the Bull—the sign of April.

Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course; they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduc'd their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions, like themselves,
The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat;
A thousand demigods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of heaven:—Some advise it, others dissuade:—A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created: Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search;—Satan their chief undertakes alone the voyage;—is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways, and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates;—finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them;—by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between hell and heaven,—with what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.

HIGH on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus[1] and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd
To that bad eminence: and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high; insatiate to pursue
Vain war with heaven; and, by success[2] untaught,
His proud imaginations thus display'd.
  Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!
For since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppress'd and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost. From this descent

[1] 'Ormus:' an island in the Persian Gulf.—[2] 'Success:' *i. e.*, bad success.

Celestial virtues rising, will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.
Me, though just right, and the fix'd laws of Heaven
Did first create your Leader; next, free choice,
With what besides, in council or in fight,
Hath been achiev'd of merit; yet this loss,
Thus far at least recover'd, hath much more
Establish'd in a safe unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferiour; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim,
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction; for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence; none whose portion is so small
Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assur'd us; and, by what best way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate: Who can advise, may speak.
He ceas'd; and next him Moloch, scepter'd king,
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in heaven, now fiercer by despair:
His trust was with the Eternal to be deem'd
Equal in strength; and rather than be less
Car'd not to be at all; with that care lost

Went all his fear: of God, or hell, or worse,
He reck'd not; and these words thereafter spake:
My sentence is for open war: Of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.
For while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend, sit lingering here
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
Accept this dark, opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,
Arm'd with Hell-flames and fury, all at once,
O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
Infernal thunder; and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horrour shot with equal rage
Among his Angels; and his throne itself
Mix'd with Tartarean sulphur, and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult and deep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe.
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benum not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat: Descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce Foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy then;
The event is fear'd; should we again provoke

Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
To our destruction; if there be in Hell,
Fear to be worse destroy'd: What can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemn'd
In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
When pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end,
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
Calls us to penance? More destroy'd than thus,
We should be quite abolish'd, and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential; happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being:
Or if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal throne:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.
He ended frowning, and his look denounc'd
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up-rose
Belial, in act more graceful than humane:
A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seem'd
For dignity composed, and high exploit:
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low:
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds

Timorous and slothful: yet he pleas'd the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began.
I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate; if what was urg'd
Main reason to persuade immediate war,
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
When he, who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels, and in what excels,
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The towers of Heav'n are fill'd
With armed watch, that render all access
Impregnable: oft on the bordering deep
Encamp their legions; or, with obscure wing,
Scout far and wide into the realm of night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest insurrection, to confound
Heaven's purest light; yet our great Enemy,
All incorruptible, would on his throne
Sit unpolluted; and the ethereal mould,
Incapable of stain, would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repuls'd, our final hope
Is flat despair: We must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage,
And that must end us; that must be our cure,
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,

Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? how he can,
Is doubtful; that he never will, is sure.
Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
Belike through impotence, or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger, whom his anger saves
To punish endless? Wherefore cease we then?
Say they who counsel war, we are decreed,
Reserv'd, and destin'd to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse? Is this then, worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What! when we fled amain, pursued, and struck
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us? This Hell then seem'd
A refuge from those wounds: or when we lay
Chain'd on the burning lake? That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
Awak'd, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames? or, from above,
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her stores were open'd, and this firmament
Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrours, threatening hideous fall
One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest shall be hurl'd,
Each on his rock transfix'd, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds; or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains;
There to converse with everlasting groans,

Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
War therefore, open or conceal'd, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
With Him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's highth
All these our motions vain sees, and derides;
Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we then live thus vile, the race of Heaven
Thus trampled, thus expell'd to suffer here
Chains and these torments? better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust
That so ordains: This was at first resolv'd,
If we were wise, against so great a Foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh, when those who at the spear are bold
And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
What yet they know must follow, to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their Conquerour: This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Supreme Foe in time may much remit
His anger; and perhaps, thus far remov'd,
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punish'd; whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapour; or, inur'd, not feel;
Or, chang'd at length, and to the place conform'd
In temper and in nature, will receive

Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;
This horrour will grow mild, this darkness light;
Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting; since our present lot appears
For happy, though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe.
Thus Belial, with words cloth'd in reason's garb,
Counsell'd ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace: and after him thus Mammon spake.
Either to disenthrone the King of Heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost: Him to unthrone we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife:
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter: For what place can be for us
Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord Supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws impos'd, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced Halleluiahs; while he lordly sits
Our envied Sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odours, and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In Heaven, this our delight; how wearisome
Eternity so spent, in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtain'd
Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek

Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free, and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create; and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain,
Through labour and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscur'd,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne; from whence deep thunders roar
Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell?
As he our darkness, cannot we his light
Imitate when we please? This desart soil
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heaven show more?
Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements; these piercing fires,
As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are, and where; dismissing quite
All thoughts of war: Ye have what I advise.
He scarce had finish'd, when such murmur fill'd
The assembly, as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long

Had rous'd the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o'er-watch'd, whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest: Such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleas'd,
Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell: So much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise,
By policy, and long procéss of time,
In emulation opposite to Heaven.
Which when Beëlzebub perceiv'd, than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspéct he rose, and in his rising seem'd
A pillar of state: deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic, though in ruin: sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies: his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake.
"Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven,
Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be call'd
Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines, here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire; doubtless! while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heaven hath doom'd
This place our dungeon; not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne, but to remain,

In strictest bondage, though thus far remov'd
Under the inevitable curb, reserv'd
His captive multitude: For He, be sure,
In highth or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt; but over Hell extend
His empire, and with iron scepter rule
Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determin'd us, and foil'd with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsaf'd or sought; for what peace will be given
To us enslav'd, but custody severe,
And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to our power hostility and hate,
Untam'd reluctance, and revenge though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conquerour least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need,
With dangerous expedition, to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault, or siege,
Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetick fame in Heaven
Err not), another world, the happy seat
Of some new race called Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favour'd more
Of Him who rules above: so was his will
Pronounc'd among the gods, and by an oath,
That shook heaven's whole circumference, confirm'd.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn

What creatures there inhabit, of what mould,
Or substance, how endued, and what their power,
And where their weakness, how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,
And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie expos'd,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it: Here perhaps
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset; either with Hell fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In his disturbance; when his darling sons,
Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original, and faded bliss,
Faded so soon. Advise, if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires. Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devis'd
By Satan, and in part propos'd: For whence,
But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The Great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleas'd highly those infernal States, and joy

Sparkled in all their eyes; with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews.
Well have ye judg'd, well ended long debate,
Synod of gods! and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolv'd, which, from the lowest deep,
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone
Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,
Secure; and at the brightening orient beam
Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But first, whom shall we send
In search of this new world? whom shall we find
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet
The dark, unbottom'd, infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings,
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries, and stations thick
Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection; and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for, on whom we send,
The weight of all, and our last hope, relics.
This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appear'd
To second, or oppose, or undertake,
The perilous attempt: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each

In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonish'd: None, among the choice and prime
Of those Heaven-warring champions, could be found
So hardy, as to proffer, or accept
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till at last
Satan, whom now transcendent glory rais'd
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride,
Conscious of highest worth, unmov'd thus spake:
O Progeny of Heaven, empyreal Thrones!
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seiz'd us, though undismay'd: Long is the way
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light:
Our prison strong; this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round,
Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
Barr'd over us, prohibit all egress.
These pass'd, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night receives him next
Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plung'd in that abortive gulf.
If thence he 'scape into whatever world
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranty, adorn'd
With splendour, arm'd with power, if aught propos'd
And judg'd of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due,
Of hazard more, as he above the rest

High honour'd sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,
Terrour of Heaven, though fallen! intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable: if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion; intermit no watch
Against a wakeful Foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all: This enterprise
None shall partake with me. Thus saying, rose
The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent, lest, from his resolution rais'd,
Others among the chief might offer now
(Certain to be refus'd) what erst they fear'd;
And, so refus'd, might in opinion stand
His rivals; winning cheap the high repute,
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure, than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose:
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a god
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven:
Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd
That for the general safety he despis'd
His own; For neither do the Spirits damn'd
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition, varnish'd o'er with zeal.
Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread

Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darken'd landskip snow, or shower;
If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! Devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds; men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace: and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife,
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy;
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night, for his destruction wait.
The Stygian council thus dissolv'd; and forth
In order came the grand infernal Peers:
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seem'd
Alone the Antagonist of Heaven, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperour, with pomp supreme,
And God-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed,
With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpets' regal sound the great result:
Towards the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchemy,[1]
By herald's voice explain'd; the hollow abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout return'd them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat rais'd
By false presumptuous hope, the ranged Powers

[1] 'Alchemy' means here any mixed metal.

Disband; and wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplex'd, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing, or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games, or Pythian fields
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form.
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds, before each van
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of Heaven the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhœan rage more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind: Hell scarce holds the wild uproar.
As when Alcides,[1] from Oechalia[2] crown'd
With conquest, felt the envenom'd robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroick deeds and hapless fall
By doom of battle; and complain that fate
Free virtue should enthrall to force or chance.
Their song was partial; but the harmony
(What could it less, when Spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet,

[1] 'Alcides:' Hercules.—[2] 'Oechalia:' a mount in Thessaly.

(For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense,)
Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate:
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame;
Vain wisdom all and false philosophy!
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdured breast
With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams;
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, nam'd of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks,
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land

Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; or else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog[1]
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: The parching air
Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither, by harpy-footed Furies hal'd,
At certain revolutions, all the damn'd
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
Immoveable, infix'd, and frozen round,
Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink;
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt,
Medusa with Gorgonian terrour guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confus'd march forlorn, the adventurous bands,
With shuddering horrour pale, and eyes aghast,
View'd first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest: Through many a dark and dreary vale
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,

[1] 'Serbonian bog:' the Lake Serbonis in Egypt, surrounded by hills of loose sand, which fall into it—in compass one thousand furlongs.

A universe of death; which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.

Meanwhile, the Adversary of God and man,
Satan, with thoughts inflam'd of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and towards the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left;
Now shaves with level wing the deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave, towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore,[1] whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they, on the trading flood,[2]
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply stemming nightly towards the pole: So seem'd
Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
Hell bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impal'd with circling fire,
Yet unconsum'd. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape;
The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair;
But ended foul in many a scaly fold
Voluminous and vast; a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting: About her middle round

[1] 'Ternate and Tidore:' two of the Molucca islands in the East Indian Sea.—
[2] 'Trading flood:' flood propelled by the trade winds.

A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing bark'd,
With wide Cerberean mouths, full loud, and rung
A hideous peal; yet when they list would creep,
If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb
And kennel there; yet there still bark'd, and howl'd
Within unseen. Far less abhorr'd than these
Vex'd Scylla,[1] bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian[2] shore:
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, call'd
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other shape,
If shape it might be call'd that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called that shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either; black it stood as Night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart: what seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast,
With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted Fiend what this might be admir'd,
Admir'd, not fear'd; God and his Son except,
Created thing not valued he, nor shunn'd;
And, with disdainful look, thus first began.

Whence, and what art thou, execrable shape!
That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave ask'd of thee:

[1] 'Scylla:' See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 14th Book.—[2] 'Trinacrian:' Sicilian.

Retire, or taste thy folly; and learn by proof,
Hell-born! not to contend with Spirits of Heaven
To whom the Goblin full of wrath replied:
Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,
Who first broke peace in Heaven, and faith, till then
Unbroken; and in proud, rebellious arms,
Drew after him the third part of Heaven's sons
Conjur'd against the Highest; for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemn'd
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon'st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,
Hell-doom'd! and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive! and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horrour seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.
So spake the grizly Terrour, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform. On the other side,
Incens'd with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burn'd,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus[1] huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levell'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds,
With Heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian, then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air:

[1] 'Ophiuchus:' or Serpentarius, a constellation extending over forty degrees.

So frown'd the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown; so match'd they stood;
For never but once more[1] was either like
To meet so great a Foe: And now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
Fast by Hell-gate, and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rush'd between.
O Father! what intends thy hand, she cried,
Against thy only Son? What fury, O Son!
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy Father's head? and know'st for whom;
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordain'd his drudge, to execute
Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids;
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both.
She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest
Forbore; then these to her Satan return'd:
So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends; till first I know of thee,
What thing thou art, thus double-form'd; and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
Me Father, and that phantasm call'st my Son:
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee.
To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied:
Hast thou forgotten me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul? once deem'd so fair
In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined

[1] 'But once more:' referring to the Messiah, who is to destroy 'Death and him that hath the power of Death.'

In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surpris'd thee, dim thine eyes and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth; till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess arm'd,
Out of thy head I sprung: Amazement seiz'd
All the host of Heaven; back they recoil'd, afraid
At first, and call'd me *Sin*, and for a sign
Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
I pleas'd and with attractive graces won
The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
Becam'st enamour'd, and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret, that my womb conceived
A growing burden. Meanwhile, war arose,
And fields were fought in Heaven; wherein remain'd
(For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
Clear victory; to our part loss and rout,
Through all the empyréan; down they fell,
Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
Into this deep; and in the general fall
I also: at which time this powerful key
Into my hand was given, with charge to keep
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt, and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew

Transform'd: But he my inbred enemy
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sigh'd
From all her caves, and back resounded *Death*
I fled; but he pursued, (though more it seems
Inflam'd with lust than rage,) and, swifter far,
Me overtook his mother all dismay'd,
And, in embraces forcible and foul,
Ingendering with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that, with ceaseless cry,
Surround me, as thou saw'st; hourly conceiv'd,
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me; for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth
Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
And me his parent would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved; and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel and his bane,
Whenever that shall be; so Fate pronounced.
But thou, O Father! I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though temper'd heavenly; for that mortal dint,
Save He who reigns above, none can resist.
She finish'd; and the subtle Fiend his lore
Soon learn'd, now milder, and thus answer'd smooth.
Dear Daughter! since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge

Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befallen us, unforeseen, unthought of; know,
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain
Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host
Of Spirits, that, in our just pretences arm'd,
Fell with us from on high: From them I go
This uncouth errand sole; and, one for all,
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded deep, and through the void immense
To search with wand'ring quest a place foretold
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created, vast and round, a place of bliss
In the pourlieus of Heaven, and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room; though more removed,
Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret now design'd, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where Thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom[1] air imbalm'd
With odours; there ye shall be fed and fill'd
Immeasurably, all things shall be your prey.
He ceased, for both seem'd highly pleased; and Death
Grinn'd horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be fill'd; and blest his maw
Destined to that good hour: No less rejoiced
His mother bad; and thus bespake her sire.
The key of this infernal pit by due,
And by command of Heaven's all-powerful King,

[1] 'Buxom:' yielding.

I keep; by him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatch'd by living might.
But what owe I to his commands above
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confin'd,
Inhabitant of Heaven, and heavenly born,
Here, in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrours and with clamours compass'd round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.
  Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers
Could once have moved: then in the key-hole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron, or solid rock, with ease
Unfastens; On a sudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She open'd, but to shut
Excell'd her power; the gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings a banner'd host,

Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots rank'd in loose array;
So wide they stood, and, like a furnace-mouth
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep; a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth, and highth,
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For hot, cold, moist, and dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms; they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumber'd as the sands
Of Barca, or Cyrene's[1] torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere.
He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray,
By which he reigns: Next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mix'd
Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds;
Into this wild abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell, and look'd a while,

[1] 'Barca and Cyrene:' regions of Africa.

Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less peal'd
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small), than when Bellona[1] storms,
With all her battering engines bent to rase
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of Heaven were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The steadfast earth. At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
Uplifted spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity: All unawares,
Fluttering his pennons vain, plump down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep; and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft: That fury staid,
Quench'd in a boggy Syrtis,[2] neither sea
Nor good dry land: Nigh founder'd on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryphon,[3] through the wilderness
With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian,[4] who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloin'd
The guarded gold: So eagerly the Fiend
O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,

[1] 'Bellona:' the war goddess.—[2] 'Syrtis:' a bog.—[3] 'Gryphon:' a fabulous creature; upper part like an eagle, lower part like a lion; said to guard gold mines.—[4] 'Arimaspian:' a people of Scythia, said to be one-eyed, and fond of gold.

And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies:
At length, a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds, and voices all confus'd,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence: Thither he plies,
Undaunted to meet there whatever Power
Or Spirit of the nethermost abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful deep; with him enthroned
Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by him stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded Name
Of Demogorgon;[1] Rumour next and Chance,
And Tumult and Confusion all embroil'd,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.
To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: Ye Powers
And Spirits of this nethermost abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night! I come no spy,
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint,
Wandering this darksome desert, as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
Confine with Heaven; or, if some other place,
From your dominion won, the ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound; direct my course;
Directed, no mean recompence it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,

[1] 'Demogorgon:' the mystic name of an enchanter.

All usurpation thence expell'd, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway,
(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night:
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!
  Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answer'd: I know thee, stranger, who thou art;
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown.
I saw, and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates
Pour'd out by millions her victorious bands
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend,
Encroach'd on still through your intestine broils,
Weakening the scepter of old Night: first Hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately Heaven, and Earth, another world,
Hung o'er my realm, link'd in a golden chain
To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell:
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger; go, and speed!
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain.
  He ceas'd; and Satan staid not to reply,
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity, and force renew'd,
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse; and, through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environ'd, wins his way: harder beset,

And more endanger'd, than when Argo[1] pass'd
Through Bosporus[2] betwixt the justling rocks:
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunn'd
Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool[3] steer'd.
So he with difficulty and labour hard
Mov'd on; with difficulty and labour he;
But, he once past, soon after, when man fell,
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain
Following his track, such was the will of Heaven,
Pav'd after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge of wonderous length,
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost orb
Of this frail world; by which the Spirits perverse,
With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace.
But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim night
A glimmering dawn: Here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire
As from her outmost works, a broken foe
With tumult less, and with less hostile din;
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And like a weather-beaten vessel holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide

[1] 'Argo:' the first long ship ever seen in Greece, which conveyed Jason in search of the Golden Fleece.—[2] 'Bosporus:' the Straits of Constantinople.—[3] 'The other whirlpool:' Scylla.

In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorn'd
Of living sapphire, once his native seat;
And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent world,[1] in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accurs'd, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

[1] 'Pendent world:' not the earth, but the newly-created heavens and earth.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

God, sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards this world, then newly created; shows him to the Son, who sat at his right hand; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind; clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputation, having created man free and able enough to have withstood his tempter; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards man: but God again declares that grace cannot be extended towards man without the satisfaction of divine justice: man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to godhead, and therefore, with all his progeny, devoted to death, must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for man: the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in heaven and earth; commands all the angels to adore him: they obey, and hymning to their harps in full choir, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world's outermost orb: where wandering, he first finds a place since called the Limbo of Vanity: what persons and things fly up thither: thence comes to the gate of heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it; his passage thence to the orb of the sun; he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb, but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner angel; and pretending a zealous desire to behold the new creation, and man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed: alights first on Mount Niphates.

HAIL, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first born,
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam
May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear'st thou[1] rather pure ethereal stream,

[1] 'Hear'st thou:' *i. e.*, art pleased rather to be called.

Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,
Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite.
Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detain'd
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight,
Through utter and through middle darkness borne,
With other notes than to the Orphéan lyre,
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night;
Taught by the heavenly Muse to venture down
The dark descent, and up to reascend,
Though hard and rare: Thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene[1] hath quench'd their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks[2] beneath,
That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equall'd with me in fate,
So were I equall'd with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris,[3] and blind Mæonides,[4]
And Tiresias, and Phineus,[5] prophets old:
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move

[1] 'Drop serene:' Gutta Serena—[2] 'The flowery brooks:' Siloah and Kedron.—[3] 'Thamyris:' a Thracian poet—[4] 'Mæonides:' Homer, son of Mæon.—[5] 'Tiresias and Phineus:' one a Theban, the other King of Arcadia—both blind poets and prophets.

Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works to me expung'd and ras'd,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
From the pure empyrean where He sits
High thron'd above all highth, bent down his eye,
His own works, and their works, at once to view:
About him all the Sanctities of Heaven
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight receiv'd
Beatitude past utterance; on his right
The radiant image of his glory sat,
His only Son; on earth he first beheld
Our two first parents, yet the only two
Of mankind, in the happy garden plac'd,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrivall'd love,
In blissful solitude; he then survey'd
Hell, and the gulf between, and Satan there
Coasting the wall of Heaven on this side Night,

In the dun air sublime, and ready now
To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet
On the bare outside of this world, that seem'd
Firm land imbosom'd, without firmament,
Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.
Him God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake.
Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage
Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds
Prescrib'd, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
Heap'd on him there, nor yet the main abyss
Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems
On desperate revenge, that shall redound
Upon his own rebellious head. And now,
Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way
Not far off Heaven, in the precincts of light,
Directly towards the new created world,
And man there placed, with purpose to assay
If him by force he can destroy, or, worse,
By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert;
For man will hearken to his glozing lies,
And easily transgress the sole command,
Sole pledge of his obedience: So will fall
He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
All he could have; I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all the ethereal Powers
And Spirits, both them who stood, and them who fail'd;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
Where only what they needs must do appear'd,

Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
When will and reason (reason also is choice)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil'd,
Made passive both, had served necessity,
Not me? They therefore, as to right belong'd,
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
As if predestination overrul'd
Their will dispos'd by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
So, without least impulse, or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass, authors to themselves in all
Both what they judge, and what they choose; for so
I form'd them free: and free they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves; I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordain'd
Their freedom; they themselves ordain'd their fall.
The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls, deceived
By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace,
The other none: In mercy and justice both,
Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel;
But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine.
Thus, while God spake, ambrosial fragrance fill'd
All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect
Sense of new joy ineffable diffus'd.
Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious: in him all his Father shone

Substantially express'd; and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appear'd,
Love without end, and without measure grace,
Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake.
O Father! gracious was that word which clos'd
Thy sovran sentence, that Man should find grace;
For which both Heaven and Earth shall high extol
Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
Encompass'd shall resound thee ever blest.
For should Man finally be lost, should Man,
Thy creature late so lov'd, thy youngest son,
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd
With his own folly? That be from thee far,
That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
Of all things made, and judgest only right.
Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfil
His malice, and thy goodness bring to nought?
Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
Yet with revenge accomplish'd, and to Hell
Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
By him corrupted? or wilt thou thyself
Abolish thy creation, and unmake
For him what for thy glory thou hast made?
So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
Be question'd and blasphem'd without defence.
To whom the great Creator thus replied.
O Son! in whom my soul hath chief delight,
Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
As my eternal purpose hath decreed;
Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will;

Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
Freely vouchsaf'd; once more I will renew
His lapsed powers, though forfeit, and enthrall'd
By sin to foul exorbitant desires;
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe;
By me upheld, that he may know how frail
His fallen condition is, and to me owe
All his deliverance, and to none but me.
Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
Elect above the rest; so is my will:
The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd
Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
The incensed Deity, while offer'd grace
Invites: for I will clear their senses dark,
What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
Though but endeavour'd with sincere intent,
Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
And I will place within them as a guide,
My umpire Conscience; whom if they will hear,
Light after light, well us'd, they shall attain,
And, to the end, persisting, safe arrive.
This my long sufferance, and my day of grace,
They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
But hard be harden'd, blind be blinded more,
That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;
And none but such from mercy I exclude.
But yet all is not done; Man disobeying,
Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins
Against the high supremacy of Heaven,
Affecting Godhead, and, so losing all,
To expiate his treason hath nought left,

But, to destruction sacred and devote,
He, with his whole posterity, must die,
Die he or justice must; unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
Say, heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem
Man's mortal crime, and just the unjust to save?
Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?
He ask'd, but all the heavenly choir stood mute,
And silence was in Heaven: On Man's behalf
Patron or intercessour none appear'd,
Much less that durst upon his own head draw
The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
And now without redemption all mankind
Must have been lost, adjudg'd to Death and Hell,
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
His dearest mediation thus renew'd.
Father, thy word is past, Man shall find grace;
And shall grace not find means, that finds her way,
The speediest of thy winged messengers,
To visit all thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought?
Happy for Man, so coming; he her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost;
Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
Indebted, and undone, hath none to bring;
Behold me, then: me for him, life for life,
I offer; on me let thine anger fall;
Account me Man; I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well pleas'd; on me let Death wreak all his rage;

Under his gloomy power I shall not long
Lie vanquish'd; thou hast given me to possess
Life in myself for ever; by thee I live,
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due,
All that of me can die; yet, that debt paid,
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave,
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
For ever with corruption there to dwell;
But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
My vanquisher, spoil'd of his vaunted spoil;
Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarm'd.
I, through the ample air, in triumph high
Shall lead Hell captive, maugre Hell, and show
The Powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
Pleas'd, out of Heaven shalt look down, and smile,
While, by thee rais'd, I ruin all my foes,
Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave:
Then, with the multitude of my redeem'd,
Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anger shall remain, but peace assur'd
And reconcilement: wrath shall be no more
Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire.
His words here ended, but his meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breath'd immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience: As a sacrifice
Glad to be offer'd, he attends the will
Of his great Father. Admiration seiz'd
All Heaven, what this might mean, and whither tend,
Wondering; but soon the Almighty thus replied.
O thou, in Heaven and Earth the only peace
Found out for mankind under wrath! O thou,

My sole complacence! well thou know'st how dear
To me are all my works, nor Man the least,
Though last created; that for him I spare
Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
By losing thee awhile, the whole race lost.
Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
Their nature also to thy nature join;
And be thyself Man among men on earth,
Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,
By wonderous birth: Be thou in Adam's room
The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
As in him perish all men, so in thee,
As from a second root, shall be restor'd
As many as are restor'd, without thee none.
His crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit,
Imputed, shall absolve them who renounce
Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life. So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for Man, be judg'd and die,
And dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life.
So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate,
Giving to death, and dying to redeem,
So dearly to redeem what hellish hate
So easily destroy'd, and still destroys
In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume
Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own.
Because thou hast, though thron'd in highest bliss
Equal to God, and equally enjoying
God-like fruition, quitted all, to save
A world from utter loss, and hast been found,
By merit more than birthright, Son of God,

Found worthiest to be so, by being good,
Far more than great or high; because in thee
Love hath abounded more than glory abounds;
Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
With thee thy manhood also to his throne:
Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign
Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
Anointed universal King; all power
I give thee; reign for ever, and assume
Thy merits; under thee, as head supreme,
Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce:
All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide
In Heaven, or Earth, or under Earth in Hell.
When thou, attended gloriously from Heaven,
Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send
The summoning Arch-Angels to proclaim
Thy dread tribunal; forthwith from all winds,
The living, and forthwith the cited dead
Of all past ages, to the general doom
Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
Then all thy saints assembled, thou shalt judge
Bad men and Angels; they, arraign'd, shall sink
Beneath thy sentence; Hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile
The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell,
And, after all their tribulations long,
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With joy and love triumphing, and fair truth.
Then thou thy regal scepter shalt lay by,
For regal scepter then no more shalt need,
God shall be all in all. But, all ye gods,
Adore him who to compass all this dies;
Adore the Son, and honour him as me.

No sooner had the Almighty ceas'd, but all
The multitude of Angels, with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud Hosannas filled
The eternal regions: Lowly reverent
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground,
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns inwove with amarant and gold;
Immortal amarant,[1] a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life,
Began to bloom; but soon for man's offence
To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
And flowers aloft shading the fount of life,
And where the river of bliss, through midst of Heaven,
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream;
With these that never fade the Spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks, inwreath'd with beams;
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
Impurpled with celestial roses smil'd.
Then crown'd again, their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tun'd, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung, and, with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high;
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part, such concord is in Heaven.

Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal King; the Author of all being,
Fountain of light, thyself invisible

[1] 'Amarant,' 'incorruptible:' a flower of a purple colour, which never withers.

Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st
Thron'd inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,
Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.
Thee, next they sang, of all creation first,
Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud
Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,
Whom else no creature can behold; on thee
Impress'd the effulgence of his glory abides,
Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.
He Heaven of Heavens, and all the Powers therein
By thee created; and by thee threw down
The aspiring Dominations; Thou that day
Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,
Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook
Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks
Thou drov'st of warring Angels disarray'd.
Back from pursuit thy Powers with loud acclaim
Thee only extoll'd, Son of thy Father's might,
To execute fierce vengeance on his foes,
Not so on Man: Him through their malice fallen,
Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom
So strictly, but much more to pity incline:
No sooner did thy dear and only Son
Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail Man
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined,
He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
Of mercy and justice in thy face discern'd,
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
Second to thee, offer'd himself to die

For Man's offence. O unexampled love,
Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!
Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men! Thy name
Shall be the copious matter of my song
Henceforth, and never shall my harp thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.
Thus they in Heaven, above the starry sphere,
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
Meanwhile upon the firm opaceous globe
Of this round world, whose first convex divides
The luminous inferior orbs, enclosed
From Chaos, and the inroad of Darkness old,
Satan alighted walks: A globe far off
It seem'd, now seems a boundless continent
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
Starless exposed, and ever-threatening storms
Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky;
Save on that side which, from the wall of Heaven
Though distant far, some small reflection gains
Of glimmering air less vex'd with tempest loud:
Here walk'd the Fiend at large in spacious field.
As when a vulture on Imaus[1] bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids,
On hills where flocks are fed, flies towards the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams;
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana,[2] where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light:
So, on this windy sea of land, the Fiend
Walk'd up and down alone, bent on his prey;

[1] 'Imaus:' a mountain in Asia.—[2] 'Sericana:' a level plain between China and Imaus.

Alone, for other creature in this place,
Living or lifeless, to be found was none;
None yet, but store hereafter from the earth
Up hither, like aëreal vapours flew
Of all things transitory and vain, when sin
With vanity had fill'd the works of men:
Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,
Or happiness in this or the other life;
All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
Nought seeking but the praise of men, here find
Fit retribution, empty as their deeds;
All the unaccomplish'd works of Nature's hand,
Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mix'd,
Dissolv'd on earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
Till final dissolution, wander here;
Not in the neighbouring moon, as some have dream'd;
Those argent fields more likely habitants,
Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold,
Betwixt the angelical and human kind.
Hither of ill-joined[1] sons and daughters born
First from the ancient world those giants came
With many a vain exploit, though then renown'd:
The builders next of Babel on the plain
Of Sennaar,[2] and still with vain design,
New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:
Others came single; he who, to be deem'd
A god, leap'd fondly into Ætna's flames,
Empedocles;[3] and he who, to enjoy
Plato's Elysium, leap'd into the sea,

[1] 'Ill-joined,' &c.: alluding to the sons of God wedding the daughters of men. See Gen. vi. 4.—[2] 'Sennaar:' Shinar.—[3] 'Empedocles:' who, to be deemed a god, threw himself unseen into Etna; but whose brazen slippers, cast out, betrayed the secret.

Cleombrotus ;[1] and many more too long,
Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
White, black, and grey,[2] with all their trumpery.
Here pilgrims roam, that stray'd so far to seek
In Golgotha Him dead who lives in Heaven ;
And they who, to be sure of Paradise,
Dying put on the weeds of Dominick,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguis'd ;
They pass the planets seven, and pass the fix'd,
And that crystalline[3] sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talk'd, and that first mov'd ;[4]
And now Saint Peter at Heaven's wicket seems
To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
Of Heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo
A violent cross wind from either coast
Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry
Into the devious air : Then might ye see
Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, toss'd
And flutter'd into rags ; then relics, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
The sport of winds : All these, upwhirl'd aloft,
Fly o'er the backside of the world far off
Into a Limbo large and broad, since call'd
The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
Long after, now unpeopled and untrod.
All this dark globe the Fiend found as he pass'd,
And long he wander'd, till at last a gleam
Of dawning light turn'd thitherward in haste
His travell'd steps : far distant he descries
Ascending by degrees magnificent

[1] 'Cleombrotus :' a youth of Epirus, who, having read Plato on the Immortality of the Soul, threw himself into the sea.—[2] 'White, black, and grey :' Carmelites, Dominicans, and Franciscans.—[3] 'The Crystalline :' or Tremulous Sphere.—[4] 'First moved :' the Primum Mobile.

Up to the wall of Heaven a structure high;
At top whereof, but far more rich, appear'd
The work as of a kingly palace-gate,
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Embellish'd; thick with sparkling orient gems
The portal shone, inimitable on earth
By model, or by shading pencil, drawn.
The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw
Angels ascending and descending, bands
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz
Dreaming by night under the open sky,
And waking cried, *This is the gate of heaven.*
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flow'd
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from earth, sailing arriv'd
Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the lake
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss:
Direct against which open'd from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to the Earth, a passage wide,
Wider by far than that of after-times
Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large,
Over the Promis'd Land to God so dear;
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
On high behests, his Angels to and fro
Pass'd frequent, and his eye with choice regard
From Paneas,[1] the fount of Jordan's flood,

[1] 'Paneas:' a city at the foot of Lebanon.

To Beërsaba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore;
So wide the opening seem'd, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.
Satan from hence, now on the lower stair,
That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this world at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen, or some renown'd metropolis
With glistering spires and pinnacles adorn'd,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams:
Such wonder seiz'd, though after Heaven seen,
The Spirit malign, but much more envy seiz'd,
At sight of all this world beheld so fair.
Round he surveys (and well might where he stood
So high above the circling canopy
Of night's extended shade), from eastern point
Of Libra[1] to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond the horizon; then from pole to pole
He views in breadth, and, without longer pause
Downright into the world's first region throws
His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
Through the pure marble air his oblique way
Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
Stars distant, but nigh hand seem'd other worlds;
Or other worlds they seem'd, or happy isles,
Like those Hesperian gardens fam'd of old,

[1] 'Libra:' the Balance.

Fortunate fields, and groves, and flow'ry vales,
Thrice happy isles; but who dwelt happy there
He stay'd not to enquire: Above them all
The golden sun, in splendour likest Heaven,
Allur'd his eye; thither his course he bends
Through the calm firmament (but up or down,
By centre or eccentric, hard to tell,
Or longitude), where the great luminary
Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,
That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
Dispenses light from far; they, as they move
Their starry dance in numbers that compute
Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
Turn swift their various motions, or are turn'd
By his magnetick beam, that gently warms
The universe, and to each inward part
With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep;
So wonderously was set his station bright.
There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb
Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.
The place he found beyond expression bright,
Compar'd with aught on earth, metal or stone;
Not all parts like, but all alike inform'd
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire;
If metal, part seem'd gold, part silver clear;
If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
In Aaron's breast-plate, and a stone besides
Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen,
That stone, or like to that, which here below
Philosophers in vain so long have sought,
In vain, though by their powerful art they bind

Volatile Hermes,[1] and call up unbound,
In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,
Drain'd through a limbeck to his native form.
What wonder, then, if fields and regions here
Breathe forth Elixir pure, and rivers run
Potable gold, when with one virtuous touch
The arch-chemick sun, so far from us remote,
Produces, with terrestrial humour mix'd,
Here in the dark so many precious things
Of colour glorious and effect so rare?
Here matter new to gaze the Devil met
Undazzled; far and wide his eye commands;
For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
But all sunshine, as when his beams at noon
Culminate from the equator, as they now
Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
Shadow from body opaque can fall; and the air,
Nowhere so clear, sharpen'd his visual ray
To objects distant far, whereby he soon
Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
The same whom John saw also in the sun:
His back was turn'd, but not his brightness hid:
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
Circled his head, nor less his locks behind
Illustrious on his shoulders, fledge with wings,
Lay waving round: on some great charge employ'd
He seem'd, or fixed in cogitation deep.
Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope
To find who might direct his wandering flight
To Paradise, the happy seat of Man,
His journey's end, and our beginning woe.
But first he casts to change his proper shape,

[1] 'Hermes,' 'Proteus:' alluding to the pursuit and escape of Matter through its thousand forms, in the researches of Alchemy.

Which else might work him danger or delay;
And now a stripling Cherub he appears,
Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
Youth smil'd celestial, and to every limb
Suitable grace diffus'd, so well he feign'd:
Under a coronet his flowing hair
In curls on either cheek play'd; wings he wore,
Of many a colour'd plume, sprinkled with gold;
His habit fit for speed succinct, and held
Before his decent steps a silver wand.
He drew not nigh unheard; the Angel bright,
Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turn'd,
Admonish'd by his ear, and straight was known
The Arch-Angel Uriel,[1] one of the seven
Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
Stand ready at command, and are his eyes
That run through all the Heavens, or down to the Earth
Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,
O'er sea and land: him Satan thus accosts.
Uriel, for thou of those seven Spirits that stand
In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,
The first art wont his great authentick will
Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring,
Where all his sons thy embassy attend;
And here art likeliest by supreme decree
Like honour to obtain, and as his eye
To visit oft this new creation round;
Unspeakable desire to see and know
All these his wonderous works, but chiefly Man,
His chief delight and favour, him for whom
All these his works so wonderous he ordain'd,
Hath brought me from the choirs of Cherubim
Alone thus wandering. Brightest Seraph, tell

[1] 'Uriel:' the Angel of Light.

In which of all these shining orbs hath Man
His fixed seat, or fixed seat hath none,
But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell;
That I may find him, and with secret gaze
Or open admiration him behold,
On whom the Great Creator hath bestow'd
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces pour'd;
That both in him and all things, as is meet,
The Universal Maker we may praise;
Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes
To deepest Hell, and, to repair that loss,
Created this new happy race of Men
To serve him better: Wise are all his ways.
  So spake the false dissembler unperceived,
For neither Man nor Angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, through Heaven and Earth;
And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems: Which now for once beguil'd
Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held
The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in heaven;
Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
In his uprightness, answer thus return'd:
  Fair Angel, thy desire, which tends to know
The works of God, thereby to glorify
The Great Workmaster, leads to no excess
That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
From thy empyreal mansion thus alone,
To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps,
Contented with report hear only in Heaven:

For wonderful indeed are all his works,
Pleasant to know and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight;
But what created mind can comprehend
Their number, or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
I saw when, at his word, the formless mass,
This world's material mould, came to a heap:
Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd, stood vast infinitude confin'd;
Till at his second bidding Darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung:
Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire;
And this ethereal quintessence of Heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That rolled orbicular, and turn'd to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move;
Each had his place appointed, each his course;
The rest in circuit walls this universe.
Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
With light from hence, though but reflected, shines;
That place is Earth, the seat of Man; that light
His day, which else, as the other hemisphere,
Night would invade; but there the neighbouring moon
(So call that opposite fair star) her aid
Timely interposes, and her monthly round
Still ending, still renewing, through mid Heaven,
With borrow'd light her countenance triform
Hence fills and empties to enlighten the Earth,
And in her pale dominion checks the night.
That spot, to which I point, is Paradise,
Adam's abode; those lofty shades, his bower.
Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires.

Thus said, he turn'd; and Satan, bowing low,
As to superiour Spirits is wont in Heaven,
Where honour due and reverence none neglects,
Took leave, and toward the coast of earth beneath,
Down from the ecliptick, sped with hop'd success,
Throws his steep flight in many an aery wheel,
Nor staid, till on Niphates'[1] top he lights.

[1] 'Niphates:' a mount in Assyria near the supposed seat of Paradise.

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions—fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil, journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described; overleaps the bounds; sits in the shape of a cormorant on the tree of life, as highest in the garden, to look about him. The garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse, thence gathers that the tree of knowledge was forbidden them to eat of, under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his temptation, by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them a while to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil spirit had escaped the deep, and passed at noon by his sphere, in the shape of a good angel, down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest; their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints two strong angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping; there they find him at the ear of Eve tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance, but, hindered by a sign from heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O FOR that warning voice, which he who saw St. John
The Apocalypse, heard cry in Heaven aloud,
Then when the Dragon, put to second rout, M. uses this en phrase of his
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
Woe to the inhabitants on earth! that now,
While time was, our first parents had been warn'd
The coming of their secret foe, and 'scaped,
Haply so 'scaped his mortal snare: For now
Satan, now first inflam'd with rage, came down,

The tempter ere the accuser of mankind,
To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss
Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell:
Yet, not rejoicing in his speed, though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which, nigh the birth,
Now rolling boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish engine back recoils
Upon himself; horrour and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him; for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place: Now conscience wakes despair,
That slumber'd; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his griev'd look he fixed sad;
Sometimes towards Heaven, and the full-blazing sun
Which now sat high in his meridian tower:
Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began.

O thou that, with surpassing glory crown'd,
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new world; at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminish'd heads; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere;
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down
Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King:
Ah! wherefore? he deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was

In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompence, and pay him thanks,
How due! yet all his good prov'd ill in me,
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high
I sdeined subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome still paying, still to owe,
Forgetful what from him I still receiv'd,
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged; what burden then?
O had his powerful destiny ordain'd
Me some inferiour Angel, I had stood
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised
Ambition! Yet why not? some other Power
As great might have aspir'd, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part; but other Powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without, to all temptations arm'd.
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hadst: whom hast thou, then, or what to accuse,
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
Be then his love accurs'd, since love or hate,
To me alike, it deals eternal woe.
Nay, curs'd be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
And in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,

To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
O then at last relent: Is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduc'd
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
Under what torments inwardly I groan,
While they adore me on the throne of Hell.
With diadem and scepter high advanc'd
The lower still I fall, only supreme
In misery: Such joy ambition finds.
But say I could repent, and could obtain,
By act of grace, my former state; how soon
Would highth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore? Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void,
For never can true reconcilement grow,
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierc'd so deep:
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission bought with double smart.
This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
From granting he, as I from begging peace;
All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
Of us outcast, exil'd, his new delight,
Mankind created, and for him this world.
So farewell hope; and with hope farewell fear;
Farewell remorse! all good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my good; by thee at least
Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,

By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As Man erelong, and this new world, shall know.
Thus while he spake, each passion dimm'd his face
Thrice chang'd with pale, ire, envy, and despair;
Which marr'd his borrow'd visage, and betray'd
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld.
For heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware,
Each perturbation smooth'd with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was the first
That practis'd falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couch'd with revenge:
Yet not enough had practis'd to deceive
Uriel once warn'd; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigur'd, more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort: His gestures fierce
He mark'd, and mad demeanour, then alone,
As he suppos'd, all unobserv'd, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champain head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grottesque and wild,
Access denied; and overhead up grew
Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene; and, as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up sprung:
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round.

And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appear'd, with gay enamell'd colours mix'd:
On which the sun more glad impress'd his beams
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath shower'd the earth; so lovely seem'd
That landscape: And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair: Now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambick,[1] off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabean odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest; with such delay
Well pleas'd they slack their course, and many a league
Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles:
So entertain'd those odorous sweets the Fiend,
Who came their bane: though with them better pleased
Than Asmodëus[2] with the fishy fume
That drove him, though enamour'd, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.

Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
Satan had journey'd on, pensive and slow;
But further way found none, so thick entwin'd,
As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplex'd
All path of man, or beast that pass'd that way.

[1] 'Mozambique,' Straits of, dividing Madagascar from Africa.—[2] 'Asmodeus:' see Tobit in Apocrypha.

One gate there only was, and that look'd east
On the other side: which when the arch-felon saw,
Due entrance he disdain'd; and, in contempt,
At one slight bound high over-leap'd all bound
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve
In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold:
Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
Cross-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault,
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;
So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold;
So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.
Thence up he flew, and on the tree of life,
The middle tree and highest there that grew,
Sat like a cormorant: yet not true life
Thereby regain'd, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only us'd
For prospect, what, well us'd, had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
  Beneath him, with new wonder now he views,
To all delight of human sense expos'd,
In narrow room, Nature's whole wealth, yea more,
A Heaven on Earth: For blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was, by him in the east
Of Eden planted; Eden stretch'd her line

From Auran[1] eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia,[2] built by Grecian kings,
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar :[3] In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordain'd ;
Out of the fertile ground he caus'd to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste ;
And all amid them stood the tree of life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold ; and next to life,
Our death, the tree of knowledge, grew fast by,
Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor chang'd his course, but through the shaggy hill
Pass'd underneath ingulf'd, for God had thrown
That mountain as his garden-mould high rais'd
Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst updrawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Water'd the garden ; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears,
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account ;
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell,
How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy errour under pendant shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon

[1] 'Auran:' a city of Mesopotamia near Euphrates.—[2] 'Seleucia:' a city built by Seleucus on the Tigris.—[3] 'Telassar:' a province in Babylonia.

Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierc'd shade
Imbrown'd the noontide bowers: Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view;
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,
Others whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste:
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interpos'd;
Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose:
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant: meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispers'd, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crown'd
Her crystal mirrour holds, unite their streams.
The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field
Of Enna,[1] where Prosérpine gathering flow'rs,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis[2]
Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes, and the inspir'd
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise

[1] 'Enna,' 'Daphne,' 'Nyseian isle,' 'Amara:' places in Sicily, or Greece, or Africa, famed among the ancients for their beauty.—[2] 'Dis:' Pluto.

Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Lybian Jove,
Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his step-dame Rhea's eye;
Nor where Abassin[1] kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara, though this by some suppos'd
True Paradise under the Ethiop line
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend
Saw, undelighted, all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight, and strange.
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty seem'd lords of all:
And worthy seem'd; for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure.
(Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd,)
Whence true authority in men; though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd;
For contemplation he, and valour form'd;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace;
He, for God only, she, for God in him:
His fair large front, and eye sublime, declar'd
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks,
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad.
She, as a veil, down to the slender waist,
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dishevell'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied

[1] 'Abassin.' Abyssinian.

Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best receiv'd,
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then conceal'd;
Then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame
Of nature's works, honour dishonourable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
And banish'd from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight
Of God or Angel; for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair,
That ever since in love's embraces met;
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side
They sat them down; and, after no more toil
Of their sweet gardening labour than suffic'd
To recommend cool Zephyr, and made ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell,
Nectarine fruits which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damask'd with flowers:
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream;
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple, link'd in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking play'd
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase

In wood or wilderness, forest or den;
Sporting the lion ramp'd, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gamboll'd before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, us'd all his might and wreath'd
His lithe proboscis: close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine,
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
Couch'd, and, now fill'd with pasture gazing sat
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declin'd, was hasting now with prone career
To the ocean isles, and in the ascending scale
Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose:
When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length fail'd speech recover'd sad.

O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold!
Into our room of bliss thus high advanc'd
Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
Not Spirits, yet to heavenly Spirits bright
Little inferiour; whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love, so lively shines
In them divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that form'd them on their shape hath pour'd.
Ah, gentle pair! ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe;
More woe, the more you taste is now of joy;
Happy, but for so happy ill secur'd
Long to continue, and this high seat your Heaven
Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
As now is enter'd; yet no purpos'd foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied: League with you I seek,

And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
Henceforth: my dwelling haply may not please,
Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me,
Which I as freely give: Hell shall unfold,
To entertain you two, her widest gates,
And send forth all her kings; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me loth to this revenge
On you who wrong me not for him who wrong'd.
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet publick reason just,
Honour and empire with revenge enlarg'd
By conquering this new world, compels me now
To do what else, though damn'd, I should abhor.

So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excus'd his devilish deeds.
Then, from his lofty stand on that high tree,
Down he alights among the sportful herd
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
Now other, as their shape serv'd best his end
Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
To mark what of their state he more might learn,
By word or action mark'd: About them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
Then, as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight crouches close, then rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,
Grip'd in each paw: when, Adam first of men,

To first of women, Eve thus moving speech,
Turn'd him, all ear, to hear new utterance flow.
Sole partner, and sole part, of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all; needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample world,
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite;
That raised us from the dust, and plac'd us here
In all this happiness, who at his hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof He hath need; He who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge, of all the trees
In Paradise, that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only tree
Of knowledge, planted by the tree of life;
So near grows death to life, whate'er death is,
Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou know'st
God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree,
The only sign of our obedience left,
Among so many signs of power and rule
Conferr'd upon us, and dominion given
Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, air, and sea. Then, let us not think hard
One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights:
But let us ever praise Him, and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task,
To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers,
Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet.
To whom thus Eve replied. O thou for whom
And from whom, I was form'd, flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide

And head!—what thou hast said is just and right.
For we to Him indeed all praises owe,
And daily thanks; I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee,
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awak'd, and found myself repos'd
Under a shade on flowers, much wondering where,
And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
Into a liquid plain, then stood unmov'd,
Pure as the expanse of Heaven; I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seem'd another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the watery gleam appear'd
Bending to look on me; I started back,
It started back; but pleas'd I soon return'd,
Pleas'd it returned as soon, with answering looks
Of sympathy and love: There I had fix'd
Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warned me; "What thou seest,
What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be call'd
Mother of human race." What could I do,
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?

Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall,
Under a platane; yet, methought, less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watery image: back I turn'd;
Thou following cry'dst aloud, "Return, fair Eve;
Whom fly'st thou? whom thou fly'st, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear;
Part of my soul, I seek thee, and thee claim,
My other half:" With that thy gentle hand
Seiz'd mine: I yielded; and from that time see
How beauty is exceell'd by manly grace,
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.
So spake our general mother, and with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreprov'd
And meek surrender, half-embracing lean'd
On our first father; half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he, in delight
Both of her beauty, and submissive charms,
Smiled with superiour love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
That shed May flowers; and press'd her matron lip
With kisses pure: Aside the Devil turn'd
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
Ey'd them askance, and to himself thus plain'd.
Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two,
Imparadis'd in one another's arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least,

Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing pines.
Yet let me not forget what I have gain'd
From their own mouths: All is not theirs, it seems;
One fatal tree there stands, of knowledge call'd,
Forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidden?
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?
Can it be death? And do they only stand
By ignorance? Is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their faith?
O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Their ruin! hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with gods: aspiring to be such,
They taste and die: What likelier can ensue?
But first with narrow search I must walk round
This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
Some wandering Spirit of Heaven by fountain-side,
Or in thick shade retir'd, from him to draw
What further would be learn'd. Live while ye may,
Ye happy pair: enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed.
So saying, his proud step he scornful turn'd,
But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his roam.
Meanwhile, in utmost longitude, where Heaven
With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun
Slowly descended, and, with right aspect,
Against the eastern gate of Paradise
Levell'd his evening rays: It was a rock
Of alabaster, pil'd up to the clouds,

Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from earth, one entrance high;
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel[1] sat,
Chief of the angelick guards, awaiting night;
About him exercis'd heroick games
The unarm'd youth of Heaven, but nigh at hand
Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high with diamond flaming and with gold.
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fir'd
Impress the air, and show the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware
Impetuous winds: He thus began in haste.
Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given
Charge and strict watch, that to this happy place
No evil thing approach or enter in.
This day, at highth of noon, came to my sphere
A Spirit, zealous, as he seem'd, to know
More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly Man,
God's latest image: I describ'd his way,
Bent all on speed, and mark'd his aery gait;
But, in the mount that lies from Eden north,
Where he first lighted, soon discern'd his looks
Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscur'd:
Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
Lost sight of him: One of the banish'd crew,
I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise
New troubles; him thy care must be to find.
To whom the winged warriour thus return'd.
Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,

[1] 'Gabriel:' an archangel mentioned in Daniel, Luke, &c.

Amid the sun's bright circle where thou sitst,
See far and wide: In at this gate none pass
The vigilance here plac'd, but such as come
Well known from Heaven; and since meridian hour
No creature thence: If Spirit of other sort,
So minded, have o'erleap'd these earthly bounds
On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
But if within the circuit of these walks,
In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom
Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know.
So promised he; and Uriel to his charge
Return'd on that bright beam, whose point now rais'd
Bore him slope downward to the sun now fallen
Beneath the Azores;[1] whether the prime orb,
Incredible how swift, had hither roll'd
Diurnal, or this less volúbil earth,
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there,
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.
Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleas'd: Now glow'd the firmament
With living sapphires: Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

[1] 'The Azores:' nine islands in the Atlantic, sometimes called the Tercera, from Tercera the largest.

When Adam thus to Eve. Fair Consort, the hour
Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
Mind us of like repose; since God hath set
Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
Successive; and the timely dew of sleep,
Now falling with soft slumberous weight, inclines
Our eyelids: Other creatures all day long
Rove idle, unemploy'd, and less need rest:
Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
While other animals unactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account.
To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
With first approach of light, we must be risen,
And at our present labour, to reform
Yon flow'ry arbour yonder alleys green,
Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
That mock our scant manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth:
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
That lie bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;
Meanwhile, as Nature wills, night bids us rest.
To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorn'd:
My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst
Unargued I obey: So God ordains;
God is thy law, thou mine: To know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.
With thee conversing I forget all time;
All seasons, and their change, all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of Morn; her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds: pleasant the sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads

His orient beams on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glistering with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
Of grateful Evening mild; then silent Night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
And these the gems of Heaven her starry train:
But neither breath of Morn when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glistering with dew; nor fragrance, after showers;
Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent Night,
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.
But wherefore all night long shine these? For whom
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?
To whom our general ancestor replied:
Daughter of God and Man, accomplish'd Eve,
These have their course to finish round the earth
By morrow evening, and from land to land
In order, though to nations yet unborn,
Ministering light prepar'd, they set and rise;
Lest total Darkness should by night regain
Her old possession, and extinguish life
In Nature and all things; which these soft fires
Not only enlighten, but, with kindly heat
Of various influence, foment and warm,
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
On earth, made hereby apter to receive
Perfection from the sun's more potent ray.
These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
Shine not in vain; nor think, though men were none,
That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise:
Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth

Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night: How often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
Celestial voices, to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
Singing their Great Creator? oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonick number join'd, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.
Thus talking, hand in hand alone they pass'd
On to their blissful bower: it was a place
Chosen by the Sovran Planter, when he framed
All things to Man's delightful use: the roof,
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade
Laurel, and myrtle, and what higher grew,
Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
Fenc'd up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamin,
Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought
Mosaick; under foot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broider'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone
Of costliest emblem: Other creature here,
Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none,
Such was their awe of Man. In shadier bower
More sacred and sequester'd, though but feign'd,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espoused Eve deck'd first her nuptial bed;
And heavenly choirs the hymenæan sung,

What day the genial Angel to our sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorn'd,
More lovely than Pandora,[1] whom the gods
Endow'd with all their gifts, and O! too like
In sad event, when to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnar'd
Mankind with her fair looks, to be aveng'd
On him who had stole[2] Jove's authentick fire.
Thus, at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,
Both turn'd, and under open sky ador'd
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven,
Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,
And starry pole: Thou also mad'st the night,
Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day,
Which we, in our appointed work employ'd,
Have finish'd, happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordain'd by thee; and this delicious place
For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
But thou hast promis'd from us two a race
To fill the earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep.
This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
Handed they went; and, eas'd the putting off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid; nor turn'd, I ween,
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites

[1] 'Pandora:' sent on earth to revenge the theft of Prometheus, married to Epimetheus, and dowered with a box, which, when opened by her husband, let loose all manner of evils on the world.—[2] 'Him who stole,' &c.: Prometheus.

Mysterious of connubial love refused:
Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids encrease; who bids abstain,
But our Destroyer, foe to God and man?
Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring; sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else!
By thee adulterous Lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to range: by thee
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefil'd and chaste pronounc'd,
Present or past, as saints and patriarchs us'd.
Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
Casual fruition; nor in court amours,
Mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
Or serenate, which the starv'd lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
These, lull'd by nightingales, embracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Shower'd roses, which the morn repair'd. Sleep on,
Blest pair; and O! yet happiest, if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more.

Now had Night measur'd[1] with her shadowy cone
Half way up hill this vast sublunar vault,
And from their ivory port the Cherubim,
Forth issuing at the accustom'd hour, stood arm'd
To their night-watches in warlike parade;
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake.
Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south
With strictest watch; these other wheel the north;
Our circuit meets full west. As flame they part,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.[2]
From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he call'd
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge.
Ithuriel and Zephon, with wing'd speed
Search through this garden, leave unsearch'd no nook;
But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.
This evening from the sun's decline arriv'd,
Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escap'd
The bars of Hell, on errand bad no doubt:
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.
So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon: these to the bower direct,
In search of whom they sought: Him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Assaying, by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions, as he list, phantasms and dreams;
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise,
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise
At least distemper'd discontented thoughts,

[1] 'Night measur'd,' &c.: *i. e.*, it was about nine evening.—[2] 'To the shield,' 'to the spear:' *i. e.*, to right and left.

Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
Blown up with high conceits ingendering pride.
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touch'd lightly; for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness: Up he starts
Discovered and surprised. As when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun some magazine to store
Against a rumour'd war, the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffus'd, inflames the air;
So started up, in his own shape the Fiend.
Back stept those two fair Angels, half amaz'd
So sudden to behold the grisly king;
Yet thus, unmov'd with fear, accost him soon.
Which of those rebel Spirits, adjudg'd to Hell,
Com'st thou, escap'd thy prison? and, transform'd,
Why sat'st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?
Know ye not then, said Satan, fill'd with scorn,
Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar:
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,
The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain?
To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn.
Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminish'd brightness to be known,
As when thou stood'st in Heaven upright and pure;
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now
Thy sin and place of doom, obscure and foul.
But come, for thou, be sure, shalt give account

To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm.
So spake the Cherub; and this grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible: Abash'd the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely; saw and pin'd
His loss; but chiefly to find here observ'd
His lustre visibly impair'd; yet seem'd
Undaunted. If I must contend, said he,
Best with the best, the sender, not the sent,
Or all at once; more glory will be won,
Or less be lost. Thy fear, said Zephon bold,
Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee wicked, and thence weak.
The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
But, like a proud steed rein'd, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb: To strive or fly
He held it vain: awe from above had quell'd
His heart, not else dismay'd. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rounding guards
Just met, and closing stood in squadron join'd,
Awaiting next command. To whom their Chief,
Gabriel, from the front thus call'd aloud.
O friends! I hear the tread of nimble feet
Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade:
And with them comes a third of regal port,
But faded splendour wan; who by his gait
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell,
Not likely to part hence without contest;
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lowers.
He scarce had ended, when those two approach'd,

And brief related whom they brought, where found,
How busied, in what form and posture couch'd.
To whom with stern regard thus Gabriel spake:
Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescrib'd
To thy transgressions, and disturb'd the charge
Of others, who approve not to transgress
By thy example, but have power and right
To question thy bold entrance on this place;
Employ'd, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss?
To whom thus Satan with contemptuous brow.
Gabriel! thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise,
And such I held thee; but this question ask'd
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?
Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
Though thither doom'd? Thou would'st thyself, no doubt,
And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou might'st hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight, which in this place I sought;
To thee no reason, who know'st only good,
But evil hast not tried: and wilt object
His will who bounds us? Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance: Thus much what was ask'd.
The rest is true—they found me where they say;
But that implies not violence or harm.
Thus he in scorn. The warlike angel mov'd,
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied.
O loss of one in Heaven, to judge of wise,
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,
And now returns him from his prison 'scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither

Unlicensed, from his bounds in Hell prescrib'd;
So wise he judges it to fly from pain
However, and to 'scape his punishment!
So judge thou still, presumptuous! till the wrath
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,
Which taught thee yet no better, that no pain
Can equal anger infinite provok'd.
But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee
Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled; or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous Chief!
The first in flight from pain! hadst thou alleged
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive.
To which the Fiend thus answer'd, frowning stern.
Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting Angel! well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid
The blasting vollied thunder made all speed,
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
But still thy words at random, as before,
Argue thy inexperience what behoves
From hard assays and ill successes past
A faithful leader, not to hazard all
Through ways of danger, by himself untried:
I, therefore, I alone, first undertook
To wing the desolate abyss, and spy
This new created world, whereof in Hell
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted Powers
To settle here on earth, or in mid-air;
Though for possession, put to try once more
What thou and thy gay legions dare against;

Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,
And practis'd distances to cringe, not fight.
To whom the warriour-Angel soon replied.
To say and straight unsay, pretending first
Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
Argues no leader, but a liar trac'd,
Satan; and could'st thou faithful add? O name,
O sacred name of faithfulness profan'd!
Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
Army of Fiends, fit body to fit head.
Was this your discipline and faith engag'd,
Your military obedience, to dissolve
Allegiance to the acknowledg'd Power supreme?
And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
Patron of liberty, who more than thou
Once fawn'd, and cring'd, and servilely ador'd
Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
But mark what I areed[1] thee now, Avant;
Fly thither whence thou fledst! If, from this hour
Within these hallow'd limits thou appear,
Back to the infernal pit I drag thee chain'd,
And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of Hell too slightly barr'd.
So threaten'd he; but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage replied.
Then when I am thy captive talk of chains,
Proud limitary Cherub! but ere then
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,

[1] 'Areed:' appoint, or decree.

Us'd to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
In progress through the road of Heaven star-pav'd.
While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright
Turn'd fiery red, sharpening in mooned horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported[1] spears, as thick as when a field
Of Ceres, ripe for harvest, waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind
Sways them; the careful plowman doubting stands,
Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarm'd,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremov'd:
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat Horrour plum'd; nor wanted in his grasp
What seem'd both spear and shield: Now dreadful deeds
Might have ensued, nor only Paradise,
In this commotion, but the starry cope
Of Heaven perhaps, or all the elements
At least had gone to wrack, disturb'd and torn
With violence of this conflict, had not soon
The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales,[2] yet seen
Betwixt Astrea and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first he weigh'd,
The pendulous round earth with balanc'd air
In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
Battles and realms: In these he put two weights,
The sequel each of parting and of fight:
The latter quick up flew, and kick'd the beam;
Which Gabriel spying, thus bespake the Fiend.
Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine;

[1] 'Ported:' a military term—*borne, pointed.*—[2] 'Golden scales:' the constellation Libra, or the Balance

Neither our own, but given: What folly then
To boast what arms can do? since thine no more
Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now
To trample thee as mire: For proof look up,
And read thy lot in yon celestial sign;
Where thou art weigh'd, and shown how light, how weak,
If thou resist. The Fiend look'd up, and knew
His mounted scale aloft: Nor more; but fled
Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

M. does not borrow without adding a
may note the fresh turns he has given to
: seal. identifies the seals with the sign
ed Libra = "Balance" — a poetic fancy wh
— a certain reality to the fiction of the
ew association and interest to Libra,
resents the scales as those with which
asured out the universe and ch- ele
by adding to the importance of the
eighters our sense of the greatness
e fate is weighed in them. and i
grandeur of the whole scene.

BOOK V.

THE ARGUMENT.

Morning approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her: they come forth to their day-labours: their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise; his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise got together by Eve; their discourse at table: Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the north, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam wak'd, so custom'd; for his sleep
Was aery-light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough; so much the more
His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve
With tresses discompos'd, and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest: He, on his side
Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then, with voice

Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus: Awake,
My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,
Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight!
Awake: The morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How nature paints her colours, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.
Such whispering wak'd her, but with startled eye
On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake.
O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection! glad I see
Thy face, and morn return'd: for I this night
(Such night till this I never pass'd) have dream'd,
If dream'd, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow's next design,
But of offence and trouble, which my mind
Knew never till this irksome night: Methought
Close at mine ear one call'd me forth to walk
With gentle voice; I thought it thine: it said,
"Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song; now reigns
Full-orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain,
If none regard; Heaven wakes with all his eyes,
Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire?
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze."
I rose as at thy call, but found thee not;
To find thee I directed then my walk;

And on, methought, alone I pass'd through ways
That brought me on a sudden to the tree
Of interdicted knowledge: fair it seem'd,
Much fairer to my fancy than by day:
And, as I wondering look'd, beside it stood
One shap'd and wing'd like one of those from Heaven
By us oft seen; his dewy locks distill'd
Ambrosia; on that tree he also gaz'd;
And "O fair plant," said he, "with fruit surcharg'd,
"Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
"Nor god, nor man? Is knowledge so despis'd?
"Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
"Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
"Longer thy offer'd good: why else set here?"
This said, he paus'd not, but with venturous arm
He pluck'd, he tasted; me damp horrour chill'd
At such bold words vouch'd with a deed so bold:
But he thus, overjoy'd; "O fruit divine,
"Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt,
"Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
"For gods, yet able to make gods of men:
"And why not gods of men? since good, the more
"Communicated, more abundant grows,
"The author not impair'd, but honour'd more?
"Here, happy creature, fair angelick Eve!
"Partake thou also; happy though thou art,
"Happier thou may'st be, worthier can'st not be:
"Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods
"Thyself a goddess, not to earth confin'd,
"But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes
"Ascend to Heaven, by merit thine, and see
"What life the gods live there, and such live thou!"
So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part

Which he had pluck'd: the pleasant savoury smell
So quicken'd appetite, that I, methought,
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
With him I flew, and underneath beheld
The earth outstretch'd immense, a prospect wide
And various: Wondering at my flight and change
To this high exaltation; suddenly
My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
And fell asleep; but O, how glad I wak'd
To find this but a dream! Thus Eve her night
Related, and thus Adam answer'd sad.
  Best image of myself, and dearer half,
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
Affects me equally; nor can I like
This uncouth dream, of evil sprung, I fear;
Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,
Created pure. But know that in the soul
Are many lesser faculties, that serve
Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
Her office holds; of all external things,
Which the five watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, aery shapes,
Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
Into her private cell, when Nature rests.
Oft in her absence mimick Fancy wakes
To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams;
Ill matching words and deeds, long past or late.
Some such resemblances, methinks, I find
Of our last evening's talk, in this thy dream,
But with addition strange; yet be not sad.
Evil into the mind of God or man

May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
Be not dishearten'd then, nor cloud those looks,
That wont to be more cheerful and serene
Than when fair morning first smiles on the world;
And let us to our fresh employments rise,
Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,
That open now their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserv'd from night, and kept for thee in store.
So cheer'd he his fair spouse, and she was cheer'd:
But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wip'd them with her hair;
Two other precious drops that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell
Kiss'd, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.
So all was clear'd, and to the field they haste.
But first, from under shady arborous roof
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring, and the sun, who, scarce uprisen,
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim,
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landskip all the east
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains,
Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various style; for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounc'd, or sung
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flow'd from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,

More tunable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness; and they thus began.
These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wonderous fair; Thyself how wonderous then!
Unspeakable, who sit'st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels; for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing; ye in Heaven.
On Earth join all ye Creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
Fairest of Stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou Sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st
With the fix'd Stars, fix'd in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wandering Fires, that move
In mystic dance not without song, resound
His praise who out of darkness call'd up light.
Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth
Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix
And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
Vary to our Great Maker still new praise.

Ye Mists and Exhalations that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's Great Author rise;
Whether to deck with clouds the uncolour'd sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
Rising or falling still advance his praise.
His praise, ye Winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye Pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living Souls: Ye Birds,
That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail, Universal Lord, be bounteous still
To give us only good; and, if the night
Have gather'd aught of evil, or conceal'd,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark!
So pray'd they innocent, and to their thoughts
Firm peace recover'd soon, and wonted calm.
On to their morning's rural work they haste,
Among sweet dews and flowers; where any row
Of fruit-trees over-woody reach'd too far
Their pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check
Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine
To wed her elm; she, spous'd, about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn

His barren leaves. Them thus employ'd beheld
With pity Heaven's high King, and to him call'd
Raphael, the sociable Spirit, that deign'd
To travel with Tobias,[1] and secur'd
His marriage with the seven times wedded maid.
Raphael, said he, thou hear'st what stir on Earth
Satan, from Hell 'scaped through the darksome gulf,
Hath rais'd in Paradise; and how disturb'd
This night the human pair; how he designs
In them at once to ruin all mankind.
Go therefore, half this day as friend with friend
Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade
Thou find'st him, from the heat of noon retir'd
To respite his day-labour with repast,
Or with repose; and such discourse bring on,
As may advise him of his happy state,
Happiness in his power left free to will,
Left to his own free will, his will though free,
Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware
He swerve not, too secure: Tell him withal
His danger, and from whom; what enemy,
Late fallen himself from Heaven, is plotting now
The fall of others from like state of bliss;
By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;
But by deceit and lies: This let him know,
Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend
Surprisal, unadmonish'd, unforewarn'd.
So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfill'd
All justice: Nor delay'd the winged Saint
After his charge receiv'd; but from among
Thousand celestial Ardours, where he stood
Veil'd with his gorgeous wings, upspringing light,
Flew through the midst of Heaven: the angelick quires

[1] 'Tobias:' see book of Tobit in Apocrypha.

On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
Through all the empyreal road; till, at the gate
Of Heaven arrived, the gate self-open'd wide
On golden hinges turning, as, by work
Divine, the Sovran Architect had fram'd.
From hence no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,
Star interpos'd, however small, he sees,
Not unconform'd to other shining globes,
Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars crown'd
Above all hills. As when by night the glass
Of Galileo, less assur'd, observes
Imagin'd lands and regions in the moon:
Or pilot, from amidst the Cyclades
Delos or Samos first appearing, kens
A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing
Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air; till, within soar
Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phœnix,[1] gazed by all as that sole bird,
When, to enshrine his relics in the Sun's
Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
He lights, and to his proper shape[2] returns,
A Seraph wing'd: Six wings he wore to shade
His lineaments divine; the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast,
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colours dipp'd in Heaven; the third his feet

[1] 'Phœnix.' It is not meant that he assumed the form, but only that he *appeared* a phœnix.—[2] 'Proper shape:' *i. e.*, was *seen* in his true form.

Shadow'd from either heel with feather'd mail,
Sky-tinctur'd grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
Of Angels under watch; and to his state,
And to his message high, in honour rise;
For on some message high they guess'd him bound.
Their glittering tents he pass'd, and now is come
Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm;
A wilderness of sweets; for Nature here
Wanton'd as in her prime, and play'd at will
Her virgin fancies pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.
Him through the spicy forest onward come
Adam discern'd, as in the door he sat
Of his cool bower, while now the mounted sun
Shot down direct his fervid rays to warm
Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs:
And Eve within, due at her hour, prepar'd
For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
Berry or grape: to whom thus Adam call'd.
  Haste hither, Eve, and, worth thy sight behold
Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape
Comes this way moving; seems another morn
Risen on mid-noon; some great behest from Heaven
To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
And, what thy stores contain, bring forth, and pour
Abundance, fit to honour and receive
Our heavenly stranger: Well we may afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow

From large bestow'd, where Nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare.
To whom thus Eve. Adam, earth's hallow'd mould,
Of God inspir'd! small store will serve, where store,
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes:
But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
To entertain our Angel-guest, as he,
Beholding, shall confess, that here on Earth
God hath dispens'd his bounties as in Heaven.
So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order, so contriv'd as not to mix
Tastes not well join'd, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste, upheld with kindliest change;
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India East or West, or middle shore
In Pontus[1] or the Punick[2] coast, or where
Alcinous reign'd,[3] fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell
She gathers, tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand; for drink, the grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meaths[4]
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels press'd
She tempers dulcet creams; nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strows the ground
With rose and odours from the shrub unfum'd.

[1] 'Pontus:' part of Asia.—[2] 'Punick coast:' part of Africa.—[3] 'Where Alcinous reign'd:' an island in the Ionian Sea, now called Corfu.—[4] 'Meaths:' sweet drinks like mead.

Meanwhile our primitive greatsire, to meet
His Godlike guest, walks forth without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections; in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led, and grooms besmear'd with gold
Dazzles the croud, and sets them all agape.
Nearer his presence Adam, though not aw'd,
Yet with submiss approach, and reverence meek,
As to a superiour nature, bowing low,
Thus said. Native of heaven, for other place
None can than Heaven such glorious shape contain;
Since, by descending from the thrones above,
Those happy places thou hast deign'd a while
To want, and honour these, vouchsafe with us
Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess
This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower
To rest; and what the garden choicest bears
To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
Be over, and the sun more cool decline.

Whom thus the Angelick Virtue answer'd mild.
Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven,
To visit thee; lead on, then, where thy bower
O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
I have at will. So to the sylvan lodge
They came, that like Pomona's[1] arbour smiled,
With flowerets deck'd, and fragrant smells; but Eve,
Undeck'd save with herself, more lovely fair
Than Wood-Nymph, or the fairest goddess feign'd

[1] 'Pomona:' goddess of fruit-trees.

Of three[1] that in mount Ida naked strove,
Stood to entertain her guest from Heaven; no veil
She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm
Alter'd her cheek. On whom the angel, *Hail*
Bestow'd, the holy salutation us'd
Long after to blest Mary, second Eve.

Hail, Mother of Mankind, whose fruitful womb
Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,
Than with these various fruits the trees of God
Have heap'd this table! Rais'd of grassy turf
Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
And on her ample square from side to side,
All autumn pil'd, though spring and autumn here
Danc'd hand in hand. A while discourse they hold;
Nor fear lest dinner cool; when thus began
Our author. Heavenly stranger, please to taste
These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom
All perfect good, unmeasur'd out, descends,
To us for food and for delight hath caus'd
The earth to yield; unsavoury food, perhaps,
To spiritual natures: only this I know,
That one Celestial Father gives to all.

To whom the Angel. Therefore what He gives
(Whose praise be ever sung) to Man in part
Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found
No ingrateful food: And food alike those pure
Intelligential substances require,
As doth your rational; and both contain
Within them every lower faculty
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
And corporeal to incorporeal turn.

[1] 'Three:' Venus, Juno, and Minerva, for the golden apple, given by Paris to Venus.

For know, whatever was created needs
To be sustain'd and fed: Of elements
The grosser feeds the purer, earth the sea,
Earth and the sea feed air, the air those fires
Ethereal, and, as lowest first the moon;
Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurg'd
Vapours not yet into her substance turn'd.
Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale
From her moist continent to higher orbs.
The sun that light imparts to all, receives
From all his alimental recompence
In humid exhalations, and at even
Sups with the ocean. Though in Heaven the trees
Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
Yield nectar; though from off the boughs each morn
We brush mellifluous dews, and find the ground
Cover'd with pearly grain: Yet God hath here
Varied his bounty so with new delights,
As may compare with Heaven; and to taste
Think not I shall be nice. So down they sat,
And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
The Angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
Of Theologians; but with keen despatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate: What redounds, transpires
Through Spirits with ease; nor wonder; if by fire
Of sooty coal the empirick alchemist
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
Minister'd naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquours crown'd: O innocence
Deserving Paradise! if ever, then,
Then had the sons of God excuse to have been

Enamour'd at that sight; but in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reign'd, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injur'd lover's hell.
Thus when with meats and drinks they had suffic'd,
Not burden'd nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam, not to let the occasion pass
Given him by this great conference to know
Of things above his world, and of their being
Who dwell in Heaven, whose excellence he saw
Transcend his own so far; whose radiant forms,
Divine effulgence, whose high power, so far
Exceeded human: and his wary speech,
Thus to the empyreal minister he fram'd:
Inhabitant with God, now know I well,
Thy favour, in this honour done to Man;
Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsaf'd
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
Food not of Angels, yet accepted so,
As that more willingly thou could'st not seem
At Heaven's high feasts to have fed: yet what compare?
To whom the winged Hierarch replied.
O Adam, One Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not deprav'd from good, created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
But more refin'd, more spirituous and pure,
As nearer to him plac'd, or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assign'd,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportion'd to each kind. So, from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More aery, last the bright consummate flower

Spirits odórous breathes: flowers, and their fruit.
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual; give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding; whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive or intuitive; discourse
Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours,
Differing but in degree, of kind the same.
Wonder not then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
To proper substance. Time may come, when Men
With Angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare;
And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd, ascend
Ethereal, as we; or may, at choice,
Here, or in heavenly Paradises, dwell;
If ye be found obedient, and retain,
Unalterably firm his love entire,
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more.
To whom the patriarch of mankind replied.
O favourable Spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge, and the scale of nature set
From center to circumference; whereon,
In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God. But say
What meant that caution join'd, *If ye be found*
Obedient? Can we want obedience then
To Him, or possibly his love desert,

Who form'd us from the dust and placed us here
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?
To whom the Angel. Son of Heaven and Earth,
Attend! That thou art happy, owe to God;
That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,
That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
This was that caution given thee; be advis'd.
God made thee perfect, not immutable;
And good he made thee; but to persevere
He left it in thy power; ordain'd thy will
By nature free, not overrul'd by fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity:
Our voluntary service he requires,
Not our necessitated; such with him
Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By destiny, and can no other choose?
Myself, and all the angelick host, that stand
In sight of God, enthron'd, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
On other surety none: Freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,
And so from Heaven to deepest Hell; O fall,
From what high state of bliss, into what woe!
To whom our great progenitor. Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
Divine instructer, I have heard, than when
Cherubick songs by night from neighbouring hills
Aëreal music send: Nor knew I not
To be both will and deed created free;

Yet, that we never shall forget to love
Our Maker, and obey Him whose command
Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
Assur'd me, and still assure: Though what thou tell'st
Hath pass'd in Heaven, some doubt within me move,
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
The full relation, which must needs be strange,
Worthy of sacred silence to be heard;
And we have yet large day, for scarce the sun
Hath finish'd half his journey, and scarce begins
His other half in the great zone of Heaven.

Thus Adam made request; and Raphaël,
After short pause assenting, thus began.

High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of men,
Sad task, and hard: For how shall I relate
To human sense the invisible exploits
Of warring Spirits? how, without remorse,
The ruin of so many, glorious once
And perfect while they stood? how last unfold
The secrets of another world, perhaps
Not lawful to reveal? Yet, for thy good
This is dispens'd; and what surmounts the reach
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
By likening spiritual to corporeal forms,
As may express them best: though what if Earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?

As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild
Reign'd where these Heavens now roll, where Earth now rests
Upon her center pois'd; when on a day
(For time, though in eternity, applied
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future,) on such day
As Heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host

Of Angels, by imperial summons call'd,
Innumerable before the Almighty's throne
Forthwith, from all the ends of Heaven, appear'd
Under their Hierarchs in orders bright:
Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanc'd,
Standards and gonfalons[1] 'twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glittering tissues bear imblazed
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,
By whom in bliss imbosom'd sat the Son,
Amidst as from a flaming mount, whose top
Brightness had made invisible, thus spake.
  Hear, all ye Angels, progeny of light,
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers;
Hear my decree, which unrevok'd shall stand.
This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand: your head I him appoint;
And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow
All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord:
Under his great vicegerent reign abide
United, as one individual soul,
For ever happy: Him who disobeys,
Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness, deep ingulf'd, his place
Ordain'd without redemption, without end.
  So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words

[1] 'Gonfalons:' flags, or streamers.

All seem'd well pleas'd; all seem'd, but were not all.
That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill;
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets, and of fix'd, in all her wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentrick, intervolv'd, yet regular,
Then most when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine
So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear
Listens delighted. Evening now approach'd
(For we have also our evening and our morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need;)
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
Desirous; all in circles as they stood,
Tables are set, and on a sudden pil'd
With Angels' food, and rubied nectar flows
In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heaven.
On flowers repos'd, and with fresh flowerets crown'd,
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
Quaff immortality and joy, secure
Of surfeit, where full measure only bounds
Excess, before the All-bounteous King, who shower'd
With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.
Now when ambrosial night, with clouds exhal'd
From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
Spring both, the face of brightest Heaven had chang'd
To grateful twilight, (for night comes not there
In darker veil,) and roseate dews disposed
All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest;
Wide over all the plain and wider far
Than all this globous earth in plain outspread,
(Such are the courts of God) the angelick throng,

Dispers'd in bands and files, their camp extend
By living streams among the trees of life,
Pavilions numberless, and sudden rear'd
Celestial tabernacles, where they slept
Fann'd with cool winds; save those who, in their course,
Melodious hymns about the sovran throne
Alternate all night long: but not so wak'd
Satan; so call him now, his former name
Is heard no more in Heaven; he of the first,
If not the first Arch-Angel, great in power,
In favour and pre-eminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honour'd by his Great Father, and proclaim'd
Messiah King anointed, could not bear
Through pride that sight, and thought himself impair'd.
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolv'd
With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipt, unobey'd, the throne supreme,
Contemptuous; and his next subordinate [1]
Awakening, thus to him in secret spake.
Sleep'st thou, Companion dear? What sleep can close
Thy eyelids? and remember'st what decree
Of yesterday, so late hath pass'd the lips
Of Heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts
Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont, to impart;
Both waking we were one; how then can now
Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest impos'd:
New laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise
In us who serve, new counsels to debate
What doubtful may ensue: More in this place
To utter is not safe. Assemble thou

[1] 'Next subordinate:' Beelzebub.

Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
Tell them, that by command, ere yet dim night
Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
And all who under me their banners wave,
Homeward, with flying march, where we possess
The quarters of the north; there to prepare
Fit entertainment to receive our King,
The great Messiah, and his new commands,
Who speedily through all the hierarchies
Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.
So spake the false Arch-Angel, and infus'd
Bad influence into the unwary breast
Of his associate: He together calls,
Or several one by one, the regent Powers,
Under him Regent; tells, as he was taught,
That the Most High commanding, now ere night,
Now ere dim night had disencumber'd Heaven,
The great hierarchal standard was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
Or taint integrity: But all obey'd
The wonted signal and superiour voice
Of their great Potentate; for great indeed
His name, and high was his degree in Heaven;
His countenance, as the morning star that guides
The starry flock, allur'd them, and with lies
Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host.
Meanwhile the Eternal eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
And from within the golden lamps that burn
Nightly before him, saw without their light
Rebellion rising; saw in whom, how spread
Among the sons of morn, what multitudes

Were banded to oppose his high decree;
And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:
Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, Heir of all my might,
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
Of our Omnipotence, and with what arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of deity or empire: Such a foe
Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north;
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
In battle what our power is, or our right.
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ
In our defence; lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.
To whom the Son, with calm aspect and clear,
Lightning divine, ineffable, serene,
Made answer. Mighty Father, thou thy foes
Justly hast in derision, and secure,
Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain,
Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
Illustrates, when they see all regal power
Given me to quell their pride; and in event
Know whether I be dextrous to subdue
Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heaven.
So spake the Son; but Satan, with his Powers,
Far was advanc'd on winged speed; an host
Innumerable as the stars of night,
Or stars of morning, dew-drops, which the sun
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
Regions they pass'd, the mighty regencies
Of Seraphim, and Potentates, and Thrones,
In their triple degrees; regions to which

All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
Than what this garden is to all the earth,
And all the sea, from one entire globose
Stretch'd into longitude; which having pass'd,
At length into the limits of the north
They came; and Satan to his royal seat
High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount
Rais'd on a mount, with pyramids and towers
From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold;
The palace of great Lucifer, (so call
That structure in the dialect of men
Interpreted), which not long after, he
Affecting all equality with God,
In imitation of that mount whereon
Messiah was declared in sight of Heaven,
The Mountain of the Congregation[1] call'd;
For thither he assembled all his train,
Pretending so commanded, to consult
About the great reception of their King,
Thither to come, and with calumnious art
Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears.
  Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers;
If these magnifick titles yet remain
Not merely titular, since by decree
Another now hath to himself engross'd
All power, and us eclips'd, under the name
Of King anointed, for whom all this haste
Of midnight-march, and hurried meeting here,
This only to consult how we may best,
With what may be devised of honours new,
Receive him coming to receive from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!

[1] "Mountain of Congregation:" see Isaiah xiv. 13.

Too much to one! but double how endur'd,
To one, and to his image now proclaim'd?
But what if better counsels might erect
Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?
Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and sons of Heaven possess'd before
By none; and if not equal all, yet free,
Equally free; for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
Who can in reason then, or right, assume
Monarchy over such as live by right
His equals, if in power and splendour less,
In freedom equal? or can introduce
Law and edict on us, who without law
Err not? much less for this to be our Lord,
And look for adoration, to the abuse
Of those imperial titles, which assert
Our being ordain'd to govern, not to serve.
  Thus far his bold discourse without controul
Had audience; when among the Seraphim
Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal ador'd
The Deity, and divine commands obey'd,
Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
The current of his fury thus oppos'd.
  O argument blasphémous, false, and proud!
Words which no ear ever to hear in Heaven
Expected, least of all from thee, Ingrate,
In place thyself so high above thy peers.
Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
The just decree of God, pronounc'd and sworn,
That to his only Son, by right endued
With regal scepter, every soul in Heaven

Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due
Confess him rightful King? unjust, thou say'st,
Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
And equal over equals to let reign,
One over all with unsucceeded power.
Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute
With him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and form'd the Powers of Heaven
Such as he pleas'd, and circumscrib'd their being?
Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
And of our good and of our dignity
How provident he is; how far from thought
To make us less, bent rather to exalt
Our happy state, under one head more near
United. But to grant it thee unjust,
That equal over equals monarch reign:
Thyself though great and glorious, dost thou count,
Or all angelick nature join'd in one,
Equal to him, begotten Son? by whom,
As by his Word, the mighty Father made
All things, even thee; and all the Spirits of Heaven
By him created in their bright degrees,
Crown'd them with glory, and to their glory named
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
Essential Powers; nor by his reign obscur'd,
But more illustrious made; since he the Head,
One of our number thus reduc'd becomes;
His laws our laws; all honour to him done
Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,
And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
The incensed Father and the incensed Son,
While pardon may be found in time besought.
So spake the fervent Angel; but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judg'd,

Or singular and rash: Whereat rejoiced
The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied:
That we were form'd then, say'st thou? and the work
Of secondary hands, by task transferr'd
From Father to his Son? strange point and new!
Doctrine which we would know whence learn'd: who saw
Whence this creation was? remember'st thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us, self-begot, self-rais'd
By our own quick'ning power, when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native Heaven, ethereal sons.
Our puissance is our own; our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
Who is our equal: Then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt the almighty throne
Beseeching or besieging. This report,
These tidings carry to the anointed King;
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.
He said; and, as the sound of waters deep,
Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause
Through the infinite host: nor less for that
The flaming Seraph, fearless though alone
Encompass'd round with foes, thus answer'd bold.
O alienate from God, O Spirit accurs'd,
Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
Determin'd, and thy hapless crew involved
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread
Both of thy crime and punishment: Henceforth
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke
Of God's Messiah; those indulgent laws
Will not be now vouchsaf'd; other decrees

Against thee are gone forth without recall;
That golden scepter, which thou didst reject,
Is now an iron rod to bruise and break
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise;
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly
These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrath
Impendent, raging into sudden flame,
Distinguish not: For soon expect to feel
His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.
Then who created thee lamenting learn,
When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.
So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
Unshaken, unseduc'd, unterrified.
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd
Superiour, nor of violence fear'd aught;
And, with retorted scorn, his back he turn'd
On those proud towers to swift destruction doom'd.

BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his angels. The first fight described: Satan and his powers retire under night: he calls a council; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his angels to some disorder; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelm both the force and machines of Satan: yet the tumult not so ending, God, on the third day, sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory: he, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of heaven; which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the deep: Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

All night the dreadless Angel, unpursued,
Through Heaven's wide champain held his way; till Morn,
Wak'd by the circling Hours, with rosy hand
Unbarr'd the gates of light. There is a cave
Within the mount of God, fast by his throne,
Where light and darkness, in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night;
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
To veil the heaven, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here: And now went forth the Morn,
Such as in highest Heaven, array'd in gold
Empyreal; from before her vanish'd Night,
Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain,
Cover'd with thick embattled squadrons bright,
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,
Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view:

War he perceiv'd, war in procinct;[1] and found
Already known what he for news had thought
To have reported: Gladly then he mix'd
Among those friendly Powers, who him receiv'd
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,
That of so many myriads fallen, yet one
Return'd not lost. On to the sacred hill
They led him high applauded, and present
Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,
From 'midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard.
Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintain'd,
Against revolted multitudes, the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;
And for the testimony of truth has borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence; for this was all thy care,
To stand approv'd in sight of God, though worlds
Judg'd thee perverse: The easier conquest now
Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,
Back on thy foes more glorious to return,
Than scorn'd thou didst depart; and to subdue
By force who reason for their law refuse,
Right reason for their law, and for their King
Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,
And thou in military prowess next,
Gabriel, lead forth to battle these my sons
Invincible; lead forth my armed saints,
By thousands and by millions, rang'd for fight,
Equal in number to that godless crew
Rebellious. Them with fire and hostile arms
Fearless assault; and, to the brow of Heaven

[1] 'Prooinct:' *i. e.*, on the very point of beginning.

Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss,
Into their place of punishment, the gulf
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
His fiery Chaos to receive their fall.
So spake the Sovran Voice, and clouds began
To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sign
Of wrath awak'd; nor with less dread the loud
Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow:
At which command the Powers militant
That stood for Heaven, in mighty quadrate join'd
Of union irresistible, mov'd on
In silence their bright legions, to the sound
Of instrumental harmony, that breath'd
Heroick ardour to adventurous deeds
Under their godlike leaders, in the cause
Of God and his Messiah. On they move
Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,
Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides
Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground
Their march was, and the passive air upbore
Their nimble tread; as when the total kind
Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
Came summon'd over Eden to receive
Their names of thee; so, over many a tract
Of Heaven they march'd, and many a province wide,
Tenfold the length of this terrene: At last,
Far in the horizon to the north appear'd
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretch'd
In battailous aspect, and nearer view
Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets throng'd, and shields
Various, with boastful argument portray'd,
The banded Powers of Satan, hasting on

With furious expedition; for they ween'd
That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,
To win the mount of God, and on his throne
To set the Envier of his state, the proud
Aspirer; but their thoughts proved fond and vain
In the midway: Though strange to us it seem'd
At first, that Angel should with Angel war,
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
So oft in festivals of joy and love
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,
Hymning the Eternal Father: But the shout
Of battle now began, and rushing sound
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
High in the midst, exalted as a god,
The Apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,
Idol of majesty divine, enclos'd
With flaming Cherubim, and golden shields;
Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now
'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,
A dreadful interval, and front to front
Presented stood in terrible array
Of hideous length: Before the cloudy van,
On the rough edge of battle ere it join'd,
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanc'd,
Came towering, arm'd in adamant and gold;
Abdiel that sight endur'd not, where he stood
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,
And thus his own undaunted heart explores.
O Heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest
Should yet remain, where faith and reälty
Remain not: Wherefore should not strength and might
There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove
Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable?
His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,

Soliloquies or thinking aloud are common in

I mean to try, whose reason I have tried
Unsound and false; nor is it aught but just
That he who in debate of truth hath won
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
Victor; though brutish that contést and foul,
When reason hath to deal with force, yet so
Most reason is that reason overcome.
So pondering, and from his armed peers
Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met
His daring foe, at this prevention more
Incens'd, and thus securely him defied.
Proud, art thou met? thy hope was to have reach'd
The highth of thy aspiring unoppos'd,
The throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandon'd at the terrour of thy power
Or potent tongue: Fool! not to think how vain
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;
Who out of smallest things could, without end,
Have raised incessant armies to defeat
Thy folly; or, with solitary hand
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow,
Unaided, could have finish'd thee, and whelm'd
Thy legions under darkness. But thou seest
All are not of thy train; there be who faith
Prefer, and piety to God, though then
To thee not visible, when I alone
Seem'd in thy world erroneous to dissent
From all: My sect thou seest; now learn too late
How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.
Whom the grand Foe, with scornful eye askance,
Thus answer'd. Ill for thee, but in wish'd hour
Of my revenge, first sought for, thou return'st
From flight, seditious Angel! to receive
Thy merited reward, the first assay

Of this right hand provok'd, since first that tongue,
Inspir'd with contradiction, durst oppose
A third part of the gods, in synod met
Their deities to assert; who, while they feel
Vigour divine within them, can allow
Omnipotence to none. But well thou comest
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
From me some plume, that thy success may show
Destruction to the rest: This pause between
(Unanswer'd lest thou boast), to let thee know
At first I thought that Liberty and Heaven
To heavenly souls had been all one; but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
Ministering Spirits, train'd up in feast and song!
Such hast thou arm'd, the minstrelsy of heaven,
Servility with freedom to contend,
As both their deeds compar'd this day shall prove.
To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern replied.
Apostate! still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
Of erring. From the path of truth remote:
Unjustly thou depravest it with the name
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,
When He who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebell'd
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthrall'd;
Yet lewdly darest our ministering upbraid.
Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom; let me serve
In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine
Behests obey, worthiest to be obey'd:
Yet chains in Hell, not realms expect: Meanwhile,

From me return'd, as erst thou saidst, from flight.
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.
So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
Such ruin intercept: Ten paces huge
He back recoil'd; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstaid; as if on earth
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had push'd a mountain from his seat,
Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
The rebel Thrones, but greater rage to see
Thus foil'd their mightiest; ours joy fill'd, and shout,
Presage of victory, and fierce desire
Of battle: Whereat Michaël bid sound
The Arch-Angel trumpet; through the vast of Heaven
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
Hosanna to the Highest: Nor stood at gaze
The adverse legions, nor less hideous join'd
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
And clamour, such as heard in Heaven till now
Was never; arms on armour clashing bray'd
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots rag'd; dire was the noise
Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And flying vaulted either host with fire.
So under fiery cope together rush'd
Both battles main, with ruinous assault
And inextinguishable rage. All Heaven
Resounded; and had Earth been then, all Earth
Had to her center shook. What wonder? when

Millions of fierce encountering Angels fought
On either side, the least of whom could wield
These elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions; How much more of power
Army against army numberless to raise
Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,
Though not destroy, their happy native seat;
Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent,
From his stronghold of Heaven, high overrul'd
And limited their might; though number'd such
As each divided legion might have seem'd
A numerous host; in strength each armed band
A legion; led in fight, yet leader seem'd
Each warrior, single, as in chief, expert
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of battle, open when, and when to close
The ridges of grim war; No thought of flight,
None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
That argued fear; each on himself relied,
As only in his arm the moment lay
Of victory: Deeds of eternal fame
Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread
That war and various; sometimes on firm ground
A standing fight, then, soaring on main wing,
Tormented all the air; all air seem'd then
Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
The battle hung; till Satan, who that day
Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
No equal, ranging through the dire attack
Of fighting Seraphim confus'd, at length
Saw where the sword of Michael smote and fell'd
Squadrons at once; with huge two-handed sway
Brandish'd aloft, the horrid edge came down
Wide-wasting; such destruction to withstand

He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,
A vast circumference. At his approach
The great Arch-Angel from his warlike toil
Surceased, and glad, as hoping here to end
Intestine war in Heaven, the arch-foe subdued
Or captive dragg'd in chains, with hostile frown
And visage all inflam'd first thus began.
  Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,
Unnam'd in Heaven, now plenteous as thou seest
These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,
Though heaviest by just measure on thyself
And thy adherents: How hast thou disturb'd
Heaven's blessed peace, and into nature brought
Misery, uncreated till the crime
Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instill'd
Thy malice into thousands, once upright
And faithful, now prov'd false! But think not here
To trouble holy rest: Heaven casts thee out
From all her confines. Heaven, the seat of bliss,
Brooks not the works of violence and war.
Hence then, and evil go with thee along,
Thy offspring, to the place of evil, Hell;
Thou and thy wicked crew! there mingle broils,
Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,
Or some more sudden vengeance, wing'd from God,
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.
  So spake the Prince of Angels; to whom thus
The Adversary: Nor think thou with wind
Of aëry threats to awe whom yet with deeds
Thou canst not. Hast thou turn'd the least of these
To flight, or if to fall, but that they rise
Unvanquish'd, easier to transact with me
That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats

To chase me hence? err not, that so shall end
The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style
The strife of glory; which we mean to win,
Or turn this Heaven itself into the Hell
Thou fablest: here, however, to dwell free,
If not to reign: Meanwhile thy utmost force,
And join him nam'd Almighty to thy aid,
I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.
They ended parle, and both address'd for fight
Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
Of Angels, can relate, or to what things
Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
Human imagination to such highth
Of Godlike power? for likest Gods they seem'd,
Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms,
Fit to decide the empire of great Heaven.
Now wav'd their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields
Blaz'd opposite, while Expectation stood
In horror: From each hand with speed retir'd
Where erst was thickest fight, the angelick throng,
And left large field, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion; such as to set forth
Great things by small, if, nature's concord broke,
Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
Together both with next to almighty arm
Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aim'd
That might determine, and not need repeat,
As not of power at once; nor odds appear'd
In might or swift prevention: But the sword
Of Michael from the armoury of God

Was given him temper'd so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge: it met
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor staid,
But, with swift wheel reverse, deep entering shar'd
All his right side: Then Satan first knew pain,
And writh'd him to and fro convolv'd; so sore
The griding[1] sword with discontinuous[2] wound
Pass'd through him: But the ethereal substance clos'd,
Not long divisible; and from the gash
A stream of nectarous humour issuing flow'd
Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,
And all his armour stain'd, erewhile so bright.
Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run
By Angels many and strong, who interpos'd
Defence, while others bore him on their shields
Back to his chariot, where it stood retir'd
From off the files of war: There they him laid
Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame,
To find himself not matchless, and his pride
Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath
His confidence to equal God in power.
Yet soon he heal'd; for Spirits that live throughout
Vital in every part, not as frail man
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,
Cannot but by annihilating die;
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
All intellect, all sense; and, as they please,
They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.

See Book 4 24-29

[1] 'Griding:' cutting.—[2] 'Discontinuous:' separating the continuity of the parts.

Meanwhile, in other parts, like deeds deserv'd
Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,
And with fierce ensigns pierc'd the deep array
Of Moloch, furious king; who him defied,
And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
Threaten'd, nor from the Holy One of Heaven
Refrain'd his tongue blasphémous; but anon
Down cloven to the waist, with shatter'd arms
And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing
Uriel and Raphaël, his vaunting foe,
Though huge and in a rock of diamond arm'd,
Vanquish'd Adramelech and Asmadai,[1]
Two potent Thrones, that to be less than gods
Disdain'd, but meaner thoughts learn'd in their flight,
Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow
Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence
Of Ramiel scorch'd and blasted, overthrew.
I might relate of thousands, and their names
Eternize here on earth; but those elect
Angels, contented with their fame in heaven,
Seek not the praise of men: The other sort,
In might though wonderous and in acts of war,
Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
Cancell'd from heaven and sacred memory,
Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell,
For strength, from truth divided and from just,
Illaudable, nought merits but dispraise
And ignominy; yet to glory aspires
Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
Therefore eternal silence be their doom.

And now, their mightiest quell'd, the battle swerv'd,

[1] 'Adramelech,' 'Asmadai:' idols afterwards of Samaria.

With many an inroad gor'd; deformed rout
Enter'd, and foul disorder; all the ground
With shiver'd armour strown, and on a heap
Chariot and charioteer lay overturn'd,
And fiery-foaming steeds; what stood, recoil'd
O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanick host
Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surpris'd,
Then first with fear surpris'd, and sense of pain,
Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
By sin of disobedience; till that hour
Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
Far otherwise the inviolable Saints,
In cubick phalanx firm, advanc'd entire,
Invulnerable, impenetrably arm'd;
Such high advantages their innocence
Gave them above their foes, not to have sinn'd,
Not to have disobey'd: in fight they stood
Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pain'd
By wound, though from their place by violence mov'd.
  Now Night her course began, and, over Heaven
Inducing darkness, grateful truce impos'd,
And silence on the odious din of war:
Under her cloudy covert both retir'd,
Victor and vanquish'd: On the foughten field
Michaël and his Angels prevalent
Encamping, plac'd in guard their watches round,
Cherubick waving fires: On the other part,
Satan with his rebellious disappear'd,
Far in the dark dislodged; and, void of rest,
His potentates to council call'd by night;
And in the midst thus undismay'd began:
  O now in danger tried, now known in arms
Not to be overpower'd, Companions dear,
Found worthy not of liberty alone,

Too mean pretence! but, what we more affect,
Honour, dominion, glory, and renown;
Who have sustain'd one day in doubtful fight
(And if one day, why not eternal days?)
What Heaven's Lord had powerfullest to send
Against us from about his throne, and judg'd
Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
But proves not so: Then fallible, it seems,
Of future we may deem him, though till now
Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly arm'd,
Some disadvantage we endur'd and pain,
Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemn'd;
Since now we find this our empyreal form
Incapable of mortal injury,
Imperishable, and, though pierc'd with wound,
Soon closing, and by native vigour heal'd.
Of evil then so small as easy think
The remedy; perhaps more valid arms,
Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
May serve to better us, and worse our foes,
Or equal what between us made the odds,
In nature none: If other hidden cause
Left them superiour, while we can preserve
Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
Due search and consultation will disclose.
He sat; and in the assembly next upstood
Nisroch,[1] of Principalities the prime;
As one he stood escap'd from cruel fight,
Sore toil'd, his riven arms to havock hewn,
And, cloudy in aspéct, thus answering spake.
Deliverer from new lords, leader to free
Enjoyment of our rights as gods; yet hard
For gods, and too unequal work we find,

[1] 'Nisroch:' god of the Assyrians; see 2 Kings xix. 37.

Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
Against unpain'd, impassive; from which evil
Ruin must needs ensue: for what avails
Valour or strength, though matchless, quell'd with pain
Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well
Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,
But live content, which is the calmest life:
But pain is perfect misery, the worst
Of evils, and, excessive, overturns
All patience. He who therefore can invent
With what more forcible we may offend
Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves
No less than for deliverance what we owe.
Whereto, with look compos'd, Satan replied:
Not uninvented that, which thou aright
Believ'st so main to our success, I bring.
Which of us who beholds the bright surface
Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand,
This continent of spacious Heaven, adorn'd
With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems, and gold;
Whose eye so superficially surveys
These things, as not to mind from whence they grow
Deep under ground, materials dark and crude,
Of spiritous and fiery spume, till, touch'd
With Heaven's ray, and temper'd, they shoot forth
So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?
These in their dark nativity the deep
Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;
Which, into hollow engines, long and round,
Thick-ramm'd, at the other bore with touch of fire
Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
From far, with thundering noise, among our foes,

Such implements of mischief, as shall dash
To pieces, and o'erwhelm whatever stands
Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarm'd
The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
Nor long shall be our labour; yet ere dawn,
Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;
Abandon fear; to strength and counsel join'd
Think nothing hard, much less to be despair'd.
He ended, and his words their drooping cheer
Enlighten'd, and their languish'd hope reviv'd.
The invention all admired, and each how he
To be the inventor miss'd; so easy it seem'd
Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
Impossible: Yet, haply, of thy race
In future days, if malice should abound,
Some one intent on mischief, or inspir'd
With devilish machination, might devise
Like instrument to plague the sons of men
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
Forthwith from council to the work they flew;
None arguing stood; innumerable hands
Were ready; in a moment up they turn'd
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath
The originals of nature in their crude
Conception: sulphurous and nitrous foam
They found, they mingled, and with subtle art,
Concocted and adjusted, they reduc'd
To blackest grain, and into store convey'd:
Part hidden veins digg'd up (nor hath this earth
Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
Whereof to found their engines and their balls
Of missive ruin; part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious, with one touch of fire.
So all ere day-spring, under conscious night

Secret they finish'd, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.
Now when fair morn orient in Heaven appear'd,
Up rose the Victor-Angels, and to arms
The matin trumpet sung: In arms they stood
Of golden panoply, refulgent host,
Soon banded: others from the dawning hills
Look round, and scouts each coast light-armed scour,
Each quarter to descry the distant foe,
Where lodg'd, or whither fled, or if for fight,
In motion or in halt: Him soon they met
Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow
But firm battallion: back with speediest sail
Zophiel,[1] of Cherubim the swiftest wing,
Came flying, and in mid-air aloud thus cried.
Arm, Warriours, arm for fight; the foe at hand,
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
This day; fear not his flight; so thick a cloud
He comes, and settled in his face I see
Sad resolution, and secure: Let each
His adamantine coat gird well, and each
Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbed shield,
Borne even or high; for this day will pour down,
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,
But rattling storms of arrows barb'd with fire.
So warn'd he them, aware themselves, and soon
In order, quit of all impediment;
Instant without disturb they took alarm,
And onward mov'd embattled: When, behold!
Not distant far with heavy pace the foe
Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube
Training his devilish enginery, impal'd
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep

[1] 'Zophiel:' meaning in Hebrew, *the Spy of God.*

To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
A while; but suddenly at head appear'd
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud.
Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold;
That all may see who hate us, how we seek
Peace and composure, and, with open breast,
Stand ready to receive them, if they like
Our overture, and turn not back perverse:
But that I doubt; however, witness Heaven!
Heaven, witness thou anon! while we discharge
Freely our part: ye, who appointed stand,
Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch
What we propound, and loud that all may hear!
So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
Had ended; when to right and left the front
Divided, and to either flank retir'd:
Which to our eyes discover'd, new and strange,
A triple mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seem'd,
Or hollow'd bodies made of oak or fir,
With branches lopt, in wood or mountain fell'd,)
Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
Portending hollow truce: At each behind
A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
Stood waving tipt with fire; while we, suspense,
Collected stood, within our thoughts amus'd,
Not long; for sudden all at once their reeds
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscur'd with smoke, all Heaven appear'd,
From those deep-throated engines belch'd, whose roar
Embowell'd with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul

Their devilish glut, chain'd thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes; which, on the victor host
Levell'd, with such impetuous fury smote,
That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,
Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell
By thousands, Angel on Arch-Angel roll'd;
The sooner for their arms; unarm'd they might
Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove; but now
Foul dissipation follow'd, and forced rout;
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do? if on they rush'd, repulse
Repeated, and indecent overthrow
Doubled, would render them yet more despis'd,
And to their foes a laughter; for in view
Stood rank'd of Seraphim another row,
In posture to displode their second tire
Of thunder: Back defeated to return
They worse abhorr'd. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision call'd:
O Friends! why come not on these victors proud?
Erewhile they fierce were coming; and when we,
To entertain them fair with open front
And breast (what could we more?) propounded terms
Of composition, straight they chang'd their minds,
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance; yet for a dance they seem'd
Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps
For joy of offer'd peace: But I suppose,
If our proposals once again were heard,
We should compel them to a quick result.
To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood.
Leader! the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urg'd home;

Such as we might perceive amus'd them all,
And stumbled many: Who receives them right,
Had need from head to foot well understand;
Not understood, this gift they have besides,
They show us when our foes walk not upright.
So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing, highten'd in their thoughts beyond
All doubt of victory: Eternal Might
To match with their inventions they presum'd
So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,
And all his host derided, while they stood
A while in trouble: But they stood not long;
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms
Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,
Which God hath in his mighty Angels plac'd!)
Their arms away they threw, and to the hills
(For Earth had this variety from Heaven
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale,)
Light as the lightning glimpse they ran, they flew;
From their foundations loosening to and fro,
They pluck'd the seated hills, with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and, by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands: Amaze,
Be sure, and terrour seiz'd the rebel host,
When, coming towards them so dread they saw
The bottom of the mountains upward turn'd;
Till on those cursed engines' triple row
They saw them whelm'd, and all their confidence,
Under the weight of mountains buried deep;
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
Main promontories flung, which in the air
Came shadowing, and oppress'd whole legions arm'd;
Their armour help'd their harm, crush'd in and bruis'd

Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain
Implacable, and many a dolorous groan;
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light,
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
The rest, in imitation, to like arms
Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore:
So hills amid the air encounter'd hills,
Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire:
That underground they fought in dismal shade;
Infernal noise! war seem'd a civil game
To this uproar; horrid confusion heap'd
Upon confusion rose: And now all Heaven
Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread;
Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits
Shrin'd in his sanctuary of Heaven secure,
Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
This tumult, and permitted all, advis'd:
That his great purpose he might so fulfil,
To honour his anointed Son aveng'd
Upon his enemies, and to declare
All power on him transferr'd: Whence to his Son,
The Assessour[1] of his throne, he thus began.
  Effulgence of my glory, Son belov'd,
Son, in whose face invisible is beheld
Visibly, what by Deity I am;
And in whose hand what by decree I do,
Second Omnipotence! two days are past,
Two days, as we compute the days of Heaven,
Since Michael and his powers went forth to tame
These disobedient: Sore hath been their fight,
As likeliest was, when two such foes met arm'd;
For to themselves I left them; and thou know'st

[1] 'Assessour:' *i. e.*, seated with him on the throne.

Equal in their creation they were form'd,
Save what sin hath impair'd; which yet hath wrought
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom;
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found:
War wearied hath perform'd what war can do,
And to disorder'd rage let loose the reins,
With mountains, as with weapons, arm'd; which makes
Wild work in Heaven, and dangerous to the main.
Two days are therefore past, the third is thine:
For thee I have ordain'd it, and thus far
Have suffer'd, that the glory may be thine
Of ending this great war, since none but Thou
Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
Immense I have transfused, that all may know
In Heaven and Hell thy power above compare;
And, this perverse commotion govern'd thus,
To manifest Thee worthiest to be Heir
Of all things; to be Heir, and to be King
By sacred unction, thy deserved right.
Go then, Thou Mightiest, in thy Father's might;
Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels
That shake Heaven's basis, bring forth all my war,
My bow and thunder, my almighty arms
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;
Pursue these sons of darkness, drive them out
From all Heaven's bounds into the utter deep:
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God, and Messiah his anointed King.
He said, and on his Son with rays direct
Shone full: he all his Father full express'd
Ineffably into his face receiv'd;
And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake.
O Father, O Supreme of heavenly Thrones,

First, Highest, Holiest, Best; thou always seek'st
To glorify thy Son, I always thee,
As is most just: This I my glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That thou, in me well pleas'd, declarest thy will
Fulfill'd, which to fulfil is all my bliss.
Scepter and power, thy giving, I assume,
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
For ever; and in me all whom thou lov'st:
But whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on
Thy terrours, as I put thy mildness on,
Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,
Arm'd with thy might, rid Heaven of these rebell'd;
To their prepar'd ill mansion driven down,
To chains of darkness, and the undying worm;
That from thy just obedience could revolt,
Whom to obey is happiness entire.
Then shall thy Saints unmix'd, and from the impure
Far separate, circling thy holy mount,
Unfeigned Halleluiahs to thee sing,
Hymns of high praise, and I among them Chief.
  So said, he, o'er his scepter bowing, rose
From the right hand of Glory where he sat;
And the third sacred morn began to shine,
Dawning through Heaven. Forth rush'd with whirlwind sound
The chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
Itself instinct with Spirit, but convoy'd
By four Cherubick shapes: four faces each
Had wonderous; as with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels[1]

[1] 'Wheels:' see Ezekiel.

Of beryl, and careering fires between;
Over their heads a crystal firmament,[1]
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber, and colours of the showery arch.
He, in celestial panoply all arm'd
Of radiant Urim,[2] work divinely wrought,
Ascended: at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-wing'd; beside him hung his bow
And quiver with three-bolted thunder stor'd;
And from about him fierce effusion roll'd
Of smoke, and bickering flame, and sparkles dire:
Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
He onward came; far off his coming shone;
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen;
He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime
On the crystálline sky; in sapphire thron'd,
Illustrious far and wide: but by his own
First seen; Then unexpected joy surpris'd,
When the great ensign of Messiah blaz'd
Aloft, by Angels borne, his sign in Heaven;
Under whose conduct Michael soon reduc'd
His army, circumfus'd on either wing,
Under their Head imbodied all in one.
Before him Power Divine his way prepar'd;
At his command the uprooted hills retir'd,
Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went
Obsequious; Heaven his wonted face renew'd,
And with fresh flow'rets hill and valley smil'd.
This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdur'd,
And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,
Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.

[1] 'Crystal firmament:' the 'terrible crystal' of Ezekiel.—[2] 'Urim:' referring to the stones of mystic import on the high priest's breast.

In heavenly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?
But to convince the proud what signs avail,
Or wonders move the obdurate to relent?
They, harden'd more by what might most reclaim,
Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
Took envy; and, aspiring to his highth,
Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud
Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
Against God and Messiah, or to fall
In universal ruin last; and now
To final battle drew, disdaining flight,
Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God
To all his host on either hand thus spake.

Stand still in bright array, ye Saints, here stand,
Ye Angels arm'd; this day from battle rest:
Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;
And as ye have received, so have ye done
Invincibly: But of this cursed crew
The punishment to other hand belongs:
Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints:
Number to this day's work is not ordain'd,
Nor multitude; stand only, and behold
God's indignation on these godless pour'd
By me; not you, but me, they have despis'd,
Yet envied; against me is all their rage,
Because the Father, to whom in Heaven supreme
Kingdom, and power, and glory appertains,
Hath honour'd me, according to his will.
Therefore to me their doom he hath assign'd;
That they may have their wish, to try with me
In battle which the stronger proves; they all,
Or I alone against them; since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence

Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.
So spake the Son, and into terrour chang'd
His countenance too severe to be beheld,
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
At once the Four spread out their starry wings
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
Of his fierce chariot roll'd, as with the sound
Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.
He on his impious foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as night: under his burning wheels
The steadfast empyréan shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arriv'd; in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their souls infix'd
Plagues: They, astonish'd, all resistance lost,
All courage; down their idle weapons dropt:
O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode
Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostráte,
That wish'd the mountains now might be again
Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels
Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
One Spirit in them ruled; and every eye
Glar'd lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
Among the accurs'd, that wither'd all their strength,
And of their wonted vigour left them drain'd,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.
Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd
His thunder in mid volley; for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven:

The overthrown he raised, and as a herd
Of goats or timorous flock together throng'd,
Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued
With terrours and with furies, to the bounds
And crystal wall of Heaven; which, opening wide,
Roll'd inward, and a spacious gap disclos'd
Into the wasteful deep: The monstrous sight
Struck them with horrour backward, but far worse
Urg'd them behind: Headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heaven; eternal wrath
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.
Hell heard the unsufferable noise, Hell saw
Heaven ruining from Heaven, and would have fled
Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
Nine days they fell: Confounded Chaos roar'd,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout
Incumber'd him with ruin: Hell at last
Yawning received them whole, and on them clos'd;
Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
Disburden'd Heaven rejoic'd, and soon repair'd
Her mural breach, returning whence it roll'd.
Sole Victor, from the expulsion of his foes,
Messiah his triumphal chariot turn'd:
To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanc'd; and, as they went,
Shaded with branching palm, each order bright,
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,
Worthiest to reign: He, celebrated, rode
Triumphant through mid Heaven, into the courts

And temple of his Mighty Father thron'd
On high; who into glory him receiv'd,
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.
Thus, measuring things in Heaven by things on Earth
At thy request, and that thou may'st beware
By what is past, to thee I have reveal'd
What might have else to human race been hid;
The discord which befell, and war in Heaven
Among the Angelick Powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring who rebell'd
With Satan; he who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that, with him,
Bereav'd of happiness, thou may'st partake
His punishment eternal misery;
Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
But listen not to his temptations: warn
Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard,
By terrible example, the reward
Of disobedience: firm they might have stood,
Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress.

BOOK VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Raphael, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this world was first created; that God, after the expelling of Satan and his angels out of heaven, declared his pleasure to create another world, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of angels, to perform the work of creation in six days: the angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his re-ascension into heaven.

DESCEND from heaven, Urania,[1] by that name
If rightly thou art call'd, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegaséan wing!
The meaning not the name, I call: for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, heavenly-born,
Before the hills appear'd, or fountain flow'd,
Thou with eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleas'd
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presum'd,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering: with like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element:
Lest, from this flying steed unrein'd (as once
Bellerophon,[2] though from a lower clime),
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander, and forlorn.

[1] 'Urania:' heavenly muse. — [2] 'Bellerophon,' who attempted to ride to heaven on Pegasus, but fell down on the Aleian field, where he wandered till he died.

Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible diurnal sphere;
Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchang'd
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east: still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard[1]
In Rhodope,[2] where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drown'd
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores:
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.
Say, goddess, what ensued when Raphaël,
The affable Arch-Angel, had forewarn'd
Adam, by dire example, to beware
Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
To those apostates; lest the like befall
In Paradise to Adam or his race,
Charge not to touch the interdicted tree,
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
So easily obey'd amid the choice
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve,
The story heard attentive, and was fill'd
With admiration, and deep muse, to hear
Of things so high and strange; things to their thought

[1] 'Thracian bard:' Orpheus.—[2] 'Rhodope:' a mountain in Thrace.

So unimaginable, as hate in Heaven,
And war so near the peace of God in bliss,
With such confusion: but the evil, soon
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung; impossible to mix
With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repeal'd
The doubts that in his heart arose: and now
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
What nearer might concern him, how this world
Of Heaven and Earth conspicuous first began;
When, and whereof created; for what cause;
What within Eden, or without, was done
Before his memory; as one whose drouth
Yet scarce allay'd still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
Proceeded thus to ask his heavenly guest.
  Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,
Far differing from this world, thou hast reveal'd,
Divine interpreter! by favour sent
Down from the empyréan, to forewarn
Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;
For which to the infinitely Good we owe
Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
Receive, with solemn purpose to observe
Immutably his sovran will, the end
Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsaf'd
Gently, for our instruction, to impart
Things above earthly thought, which yet concern'd
Our knowing, as to highest wisdom seem'd,
Deign to descend now lower, and relate
What may no less perhaps avail us known,
How first began this Heaven which we behold
Distant so high, with moving fires adorn'd

Innumerable; and this which yields or fills
All space, the ambient air wide interfus'd
Embracing round this florid earth; what cause
Mov'd the Creator, in his holy rest
Through all eternity, so late to build
In Chaos; and the work begun, how soon
Absolv'd;[1] if unforbid thou may'st unfold
What we, not to explore the secrets ask
Of his eternal empire, but the more
To magnify his works, the more we know.
And the great light of day yet wants to run
Much of his race though steep; suspense in Heaven
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice, he hears,
And longer will delay to hear thee tell
His generation, and the rising birth
Of Nature from the unapparent Deep:
Or if the star of evening and the moon
Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring
Silence; and Sleep, listening to thee, will watch;
Or we can bid his absence, till thy song
End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.
  Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;
And thus the Godlike Angel answer'd mild.
  This also thy request, with caution ask'd,
Obtain; though to recount almighty works
What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
To glorify the Maker, and infer
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
Thy hearing; such commission from above
I have received, to answer thy desire
Of knowledge within bounds; beyond, abstain

[1] 'Absolved:' finished.

To ask; nor let thine own inventions hope
Things not reveal'd, which the invisible King,
Only Omniscient, hath suppress'd in night;
To none communicable in Earth or Heaven:
Enough is left besides to search and know.
But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain;
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.
  Know, then, that after Lucifer from heaven
(So call him, brighter once amidst the host
Of angels, than that star the stars among,)
Fell with his flaming legions through the deep
Into his place, and the great Son return'd
Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent
Eternal Father from his throne beheld
Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake.
  At least our envious Foe hath fail'd, who thought
All like himself rebellious, by whose aid
This inaccessible high strength, the seat
Of Deity supreme, us dispossess'd,
He trusted to have seiz'd, and into fraud
Drew many, whom their place knows here no more:
Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
Their station; Heaven, yet populous, retains
Number sufficient to possess her realms
Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
With ministeries due, and solemn rites:
But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm cf I 633
Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven,
My damage fondly deem'd, I can repair
That detriment, if such it be to lose
Self-lost; and in a moment will create

Another world, out of one man a race
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
Not here; till, by degrees of merit raised,
They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tried;
And Earth be chang'd to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth.
One kingdom, joy and union without end.
Meanwhile inhabit lax,[1] ye Powers of Heaven,
And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee
This I perform; speak thou, and be it done!
My overshadowing Spirit and Might with thee
I send along: ride forth, and bid the Deep
Within appointed bounds be Heaven and Earth:
Boundless the Deep, because I Am who fill
Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.
Though I, uncircumscrib'd myself, retire,
And put not forth my goodness, which is free
To act or not, Necessity and Chance
Approach not me, and what I will is Fate.
So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake
His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.
Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
Than time or motion, but to human ears
Cannot without procéss of speech be told,
So told as earthly notion can receive.
Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven,
When such was heard declar'd the Almighty's will;
Glory they sung to the Most High, good-will
To future men, and in their dwellings peace;
Glory to him whose just avenging ire
Had driven out the ungodly from his sight
And the habitations of the just; to Him
Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordain'd

[1] 'Inhabit lax:' *i. e.*, dwell more at large.

Good out of evil to create; instead
Of Spirits malign, a better race to bring
Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
His good to worlds and ages infinite.
So sang the Hierarchies: Meanwhile the Son
On his great expedition now appear'd,
Girt with Omnipotence, with radiance crown'd
Of Majesty Divine; sapience and love
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot numberless were pour'd
Cherub, and Seraph, Potentates, and Thrones,
And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots wing'd
From the armoury of God; where stand of old
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodg'd
Against a solemn day, harness'd at hand,
Celestial equipage; and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them Spirit liv'd,
Attendant on their Lord: Heaven open'd wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.
On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore
They view'd the vast immeasurable abyss
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heaven's highth, and with the center mix the pole.
Silence, ye troubled Waves, and thou Deep, peace,
Said then the Omnifick Word; your discord end!
Nor staid; but on the wings of Cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;
For Chaos heard his voice: Him all his train

A magnificent line. (Tennyson)

Follow'd in bright procession, to behold
Creation, and the wonders of his might.
Then staid the fervid wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepar'd
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe, and all created things:
One foot he center'd, and the other turn'd
Round through the vast profundity obscure;
And said, Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O World!
Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,
Matter unform'd and void: Darkness profound
Cover'd the abyss: but on the watery calm
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infus'd, and vital warmth,
Throughout the fluid mass: but downward purg'd
The black tartareous cold infernal dregs,
Adverse to life: then founded, then conglob'd
Like things to like; the rest to several place
Disparted, and between spun out the air;
And Earth self-balanced on her center hung.
Let there be light, said God; and forthwith Light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the deep; and from her native east
To journey through the aery gloom began,
Spher'd in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle
Sojourn'd the while. God saw the light was good;
And light from darkness by the hemisphere
Divided: light the Day, and darkness Night,
He nam'd. Thus was the first day even and morn:
Nor pass'd uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the celestial choirs, when orient light
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld;

Birth-day of Heaven and Earth; with joy and shout
The hollow universal orb they fill'd,
And touch'd their golden harps, and hymning prais'd
God and his works; Creator him they sung,
Both when first evening was, and when first morn.
  Again, God said, Let there be firmament
Amid the waters, and let it divide
The waters from the waters; and God made
The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, elemental air, diffus'd
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round; partition firm and sure,
The waters underneath from those above
Dividing; for as earth, so he the world
Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
Of Chaos far remov'd; lest fierce extremes
Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
And Heaven he named the Firmament: So even
And morning chorus sung the second day.
  The Earth was form'd, but in the womb as yet
Of waters, embryon immature involv'd,
Appear'd not: over all the face of Earth
Main ocean flow'd, not idle; but, with warm
Prolifick humour softening all her globe,
Fermented the great mother to conceive,
Satiate with genial moisture; when God said,
Be gather'd now, ye waters under Heaven
Into one place, and let dry land appear.
Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky:
So high as heav'd the tumid hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,

Capacious bed of waters: Thither they
Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd,
As drops on dust conglobing from the dry:
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
For haste: such flight the great command impress'd
On the swift floods: As armies at the call
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
Troop to their standard; so the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
Soft-ebbing; nor withstood them rock or hill;
But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
With serpent errour wandering, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore;
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks, where rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
The dry land, Earth; and the great receptacle
Of congregated waters, he called Seas:
And saw that it was good; and said, Let the Earth
Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,
And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth.
He scarce had said, when the bare Earth till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green;
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flower'd,
Op'ning their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom, smelling sweet: and, these scarce blown,
Forth flourish'd thick the clustering vine, forth crept
The swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
Embattled in her field, and the humble shrub,

And bush with frizzled hair implicit :[1] Last
Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemm'd
Their blossoms: With high woods the hills were crown'd ;
With tufts the valleys, and each fountain-side ;
With borders long the rivers : that Earth now
Seem'd like to Heaven, a seat where gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
Her sacred shades : though God had yet not rain'd
Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground
None was ; but from the Earth a dewy mist
Went up, and water'd all the ground, and each
Plant of the field ; which, ere it was in the Earth,
God made, and every herb, before it grew
On the green stem : God saw that it was good :
So even and morn recorded the third day.
Again the Almighty spake, Let there be lights
High in the expanse of Heaven, to divide
The day from night ; and let them be for signs,
For seasons, and for days, and circling years;
And let them be for lights, as I ordain
Their office in the firmament of Heaven,
To give light on the Earth ; and it was so.
And God made two great lights, great for their use
To Man, the greater to have rule by day,
The less by night, altern ; and made the stars,
And set them in the firmament of Heaven
To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day
In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
Surveying his great work, that it was good :
For of celestial bodies first the sun,
A mighty sphere he fram'd, unlightsome first,

[1] 'Implicit:' *i. e.*, entangled.

Though of ethereal mould: then form'd the moon
Globose, and every magnitude of stars,
And sow'd with stars the Heaven, thick as a field:
Of light by far the greater part he took,
Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and plac'd
In the sun's orb, made porous to receive
And drink the liquid light; firm to retain
Her gather'd beams, great palace now of light.
Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
And hence the morning planet gilds her horns;
By tincture or reflection they augment
Their small peculiar, though from human sight
So far remote, with diminution seen.
First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,
Regent of day, and all the horizon round
Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
His longitude through Heaven's high road; the gray
Dawn, and the Pleiades,[1] before him danc'd,
Shedding sweet influence: Less bright the moon,
But opposite in levell'd west was set,
His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
From him; for other light she needed none
In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
Till night; then in the east her turn she shines,
Revolv'd on Heaven's great axle, and her reign
With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
With thousand thousand stars, that then appear'd
Spangling the hemisphere: Then first adorn'd
With their bright luminaries that set and rose,
Glad evening and glad morn crown'd the fourth day.
And God said, Let the waters generate

[1] 'The Pleiades:' meaning that the Creation took place in Spring, when they rise.

Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul:
And let fowl fly above the Earth, with wings
Display'd on the open firmament of Heaven.
And God created the great whales, and each
Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
The waters generated by their kinds;
And every bird of wing after his kind;
And saw that it was good, and bless'd them, saying,
Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas,
And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill;
And let the fowl be multiplied on the Earth.
Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
Of fish that with their fins, and shining scales
Glide under the green wave, in sculls that oft
Bank the mid sea: part single, or with mate,
Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
Show to the sun their wav'd coats dropt with gold;
Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food
In jointed armour watch: on smooth the seal
And bended dolphins play: part huge of bulk
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
Tempest the ocean: there leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
Stretch'd like a promontory sleeps or swims,
And seems a moving land; and at his gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
Their brood as num'rous hatch'd, from the egg that soon,
Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclosed
Their callow young; but feather'd soon and fledge

They summ'd their pens ;[1] and, soaring the air sublime,
With clang despis'd the ground, under a cloud
In prospect ; there the eagle and the stork
On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build ;
Part loosely wing the region, part more wise
In common, ranged in figure wedge their way,
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
Their aery caravan, high over seas
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
Easing their flight ; so steers the prudent crane
Her annual voyage, borne on winds ; the air
Floats as they pass, fann'd with unnumber'd plumes:
From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
Solac'd the woods, and spread their painted wings
Till even ; nor then the solemn nightingale
Ceas'd warbling, but all night tun'd her soft lays:
Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bath'd
Their downy breast; the swan, with arched neck,
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
Her state[2] with oary feet ; yet oft they quit
The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower
The mid aëreal sky: Others on ground
Walk'd firm ; the crested cock whose clarion sounds
The silent hours, and the other whose gay train
Adorns him, colour'd with the florid hue
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
With fish replenish'd, and the air with fowl,
Ev'ning and morn solemnized the fifth day.
The sixth, and of creation last, arose
With evening harps and matin ; when God said,
Let the Earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the Earth,

[1] 'Summed their pens:' a term in falconry, signifying the full growth of hawks' feathers.—[2] 'State:' *i. e.*, like a *barge* of state.

Each in their kind. The Earth obey'd, and straight,
Opening her fertile womb teem'd at a birth
Innumerous living creatures, perfect forms,
Limb'd and full-grown: Out of the ground uprose,
As from his lair, the wild beast where he wons
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den;
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walk'd:
The cattle in the fields and meadows green:
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upsprung.
The grassy clods now calv'd; now half appear'd
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the ounce,
The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks: The swift stag from under ground
Bore up his branching head: Scarce from his mould
Behemoth,[1] biggest born of earth, upheav'd
His vastness: Fleec'd the flocks and bleating rose,
As plants: Ambiguous between sea and land,
The river-horse, and scaly crocodile.
At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
Insect or worm: those wav'd their limber fans
For wings, and smallest lineaments exact
In all the liveries deck'd of summer's pride,
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green:
These as a line their long dimension drew,
Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all
Minims[2] of nature; some of serpent kind,
Wonderous in length and corpulence, involv'd
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept

[1] 'Behemoth:' Milton means the elephant.—[2] 'Minims,' *i. e.*, smallest productions.

The parsimonious emmet, provident
Of future; in small room large heart enclos'd;
Pattern of just equality perhaps,
Hereafter, join'd in her popular tribes
Of commonalty. Swarming next appear'd
The female bee, that feeds her husband drone
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
With honey stor'd; The rest are numberless,
And thou their natures know'st, and gav'st them names,
Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
And hairy mane terrifick, though to thee
Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.
Now heaven in all her glory shone, and roll'd
Her motions as the Great first Mover's hand
First wheel'd their course: Earth in her rich attire
Consummate lovely smil'd; air, water, earth,
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walk'd
Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remain'd:
There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done; a creature who, not prone
And brute as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright with front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence
Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends, thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works: therefore the Omnipotent
Eternal Father (for where is not He
Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake.

Let us make now Man in our image, Man
In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the Earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.
This said, he form'd thee, Adam, thee, O man,
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breath'd
The breath of life; in his own image he
Created thee, in the image of God
Express; and thou becam'st a living soul.
Male he created thee; but thy consórt
Female, for race; then bless'd mankind, and said,
Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth;
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
And every living thing that moves on the Earth.
Wherever thus created, for no place
Is yet distinct by name, thence, as thou know'st,
He brought thee into this delicious grove,
This garden planted with the trees of God,
Delectable both to behold and taste;
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food
Gave thee; all sorts are here that all the Earth yields,
Variety without end; but of the tree
Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil,
Thou may'st not; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest;
Death is the penalty impos'd; beware,
And govern well thy appetite; lest Sin
Surprise thee, and her black attendant Death.
Here finish'd he, and all that he had made
View'd, and behold all was entirely good;
So even and morn accomplish'd the sixth day:
Yet not till the Creator, from his work
Desisting, though unwearied, up return'd,

Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode;
Thence to behold this new-created world,
The addition of his empire, how it show'd
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
Answering his great idea. Up he rode
Follow'd with acclamation, and the sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
Angelick harmonies: The earth, the air
Resounded, (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st,)
The heavens and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their station listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
Open, ye everlasting gates! they sung,
Open, ye Heavens! your living doors; let in
The great Creator from his work return'd
Magnificent, his six days' work, a World;
Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign
To visit oft the dwellings of just men,
Delighted; and with frequent intercourse
Thither will send his winged messengers
On errands of supernal grace. So sung
The glorious train ascending: He through Heaven,
That open'd wide her blazing portals, led
To God's eternal house direct the way;
A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold
And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,
Seen in the galaxy, that milky way,
Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest
Powder'd with stars. And now on Earth the seventh
Evening arose in Eden, for the sun
Was set, and twilight from the east came on,
Forerunning night; when at the holy mount
Of Heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne
Of Godhead, fix'd for ever firm and sure,

The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
With his Great Father; for he also went
Invisible, yet staid, (such privilege
Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordain'd,
Author and End of all things; and, from work
Now resting, bless'd and hallow'd the seventh day,
As resting on that day from all his work;
But not in silence holy kept: the harp
Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe
And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
Temper'd soft tunings, intermix'd with voice
Choral or unison: of incense clouds,
Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount.
Creation and the six days' acts they sung:
Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite
Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue
Relate thee! Greater now in thy return
Than from the giant Angels: Thee that day
Thy thunders magnified; but to create
Is greater than created to destroy.
Who can impair thee, Mighty King, or bound
Thy empire? easily the proud attempt
Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain,
Thou hast repell'd; while impiously they thought
Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks
To lessen thee, against his purpose serves
To manifest the more thy might: his evil
Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.
Witness this new-made world, another Heaven
From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
On the clear hyaline,[1] the glassy sea;

[1] 'Hyaline:' translated immediately the glassy sea.

Of amplitude almost immense, with stars
Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
Of destin'd habitation; but thou know'st
Their seasons: among these the seat of Men,
Earth, with her nether ocean circumfus'd,
Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy Men,
And sons of Men, whom God hath thus advanc'd!
Created in his image, there to dwell
And worship Him; and in reward to rule
Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air;
And multiply a race of worshippers
Holy and just: Thrice happy, if they know
Their happiness, and persevere upright!
So sung they, and the empyréan rung
With halleluiahs; Thus was sabbath kept.
And thy request think now fulfill'd, that ask'd
How first this world and face of things began,
And what before thy memory was done
From the beginning; that posterity,
Inform'd by thee, might know: If else thou seek'st
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.

BOOK VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Adam inquires concerning celestial motions; is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge: Adam assents; and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation; his placing in Paradise; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve; his discourse with the angel thereupon; who, after admonitions repeated, departs.

THE Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear;
Then, as new-wak'd, thus gratefully replied.
What thanks sufficient, or what recompence
Equal, have I to render thee, divine
Historian, who thus largely hast allay'd
The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsaf'd
This friendly condescension to relate
Things, else by me unsearchable; now heard
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
With glory attributed to the high
Creator! Something yet of doubt remains,
Which only thy solution can resolve.
When I behold this goodly frame, this world,
Of Heaven and Earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes; this Earth, a spot, a grain,
An atom, with the firmament compared
And all her number'd stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible, (for such
Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal,) merely to officiate light

Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,[1]
One day and night; in all their vast survey
Useless besides; reasoning I oft admire,
How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
So many nobler bodies to create,
Greater so manifold, to this one use,
For aught appears, and on their orbs impose
Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated; while the sedentary Earth,
That better might with far less compass move,
Serv'd by more noble than herself, attains
Her end without least motion, and receives,
As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth, and light;
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.
So spake our sire, and by his countenance seem'd
Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve
Perceiving, where she sat retir'd in sight,
With lowliness majestic from her seat,
And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom,
Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
And, touch'd by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv'd,
Adam relating, she sole auditress;
Her husband the relater she preferr'd
Before the angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather: he, she knew, would intermix
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute

[1] 'Punctual spot:' spot like a *point* in size.

With conjugal caresses: from his lip
Not words alone pleas'd her. O! when meet now
Such pairs, in love and mutual honour join'd?
With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
Not unattended; for on her, as Queen,
A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
And from about her shot darts of desire
Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
And Raphael now, to Adam's doubt propos'd,
Benevolent and facile thus replied.

To ask or search, I blame thee not; for Heaven
Is as the book of God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wonderous works, and learn
His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years:
This to attain, whether Heaven move or Earth,
Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest
From Man or Angel the Great Architect
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought
Rather admire; or, if they list to try
Conjecture, he his fabrick of the Heavens
Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter; when they come to model Heaven
And calculate the stars, how they will wield
The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive
To save appearances; how gird the sphere
With centrick and eccentrick scribbled o'er,
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb:
Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
That bodies bright and greater should not serve
The less not bright, nor Heaven such journeys run,
Earth sitting still, when she alone receives

The benefit: Consider first that great
Or bright infers not excellence: the Earth,
Though, in comparison of Heaven, so small,
Nor glistering, may of solid good contain
More plenty than the sun that barren shines;
Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
But in the fruitful Earth; there first receiv'd,
His beams, unactive else, their vigour find.
Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries
Officious; but to thee, Earth's habitant.
And for the Heaven's wide circuit, let it speak
The Maker's high magnificence, who built
So spacious, and his line stretch'd out so far;
That man may know he dwells not in his own;
An edifice too large for him to fill,
Lodg'd in a small partition; and the rest
Ordain'd for uses to his Lord best known.
The swiftness of those circles attribute,
Though numberless, to his Omnipotence,
That to corporeal substances could add
Speed almost spiritual: Me thou think'st not slow,
Who since the morning hour set out from Heaven
Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
In Eden; distance inexpressible
By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
Admitting motion in the Heavens, to show
Invalid that which thee to doubt it mov'd;
Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.
God, to remove his ways from human sense,
Plac'd Heaven from Earth so far, that earthly sight,
If it presume, might err in things too high,
And no advantage gain. What if the sun
Be center to the world; and other stars,

By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
Their wandering course, now high, now low, then hid,
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
In six thou seest; and what if seventh to these
The planet earth, so steadfast though she seem,
Insensibly three different motions move?
Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,
Moved contrary with thwart obliquities;
Or save the sun his labour, and that swift
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb[1] supposed,
Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
Of day and night; which needs not thy belief,
If earth, industrious of herself, fetch day
Travelling east, and with her part averse
From the sun's beam meet night, her other part
Still luminous by his ray. What if that light,
Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air,
To the terrestrial moon be as a star,
Enlightening her by day, as she by night
This earth; reciprocal if land be there,
Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou seest
As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
Fruits in her soften'd soil, for some to eat
Allotted there; and other suns perhaps,
With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry,
Communicating male and female light;
Which two great sexes animate the world,
Stor'd in each orb perhaps with some that live.
For such vast room in Nature unpossess'd
By living soul, desart, and desolate,
Only to shine, yet scarce to cóntribute

[1] 'Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb:' the *primum mobile*—an imaginary sphere above that of the sun and the fixed stars.

Each orb a glimpse of light, convey'd so far
Down to this habitable, which returns
Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
But whether thus these things, or whether not;
Whether the sun, predominant in heaven,
Rise on the earth; or earth rise on the sun;
He from the east his flaming road begin;
Or she from west her silent course advance,
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle, while she paces even,
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along;
Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid;
Leave them to God above; him serve and fear!
Of other creatures, as him pleases best,
Wherever plac'd, let him dispose; joy thou
In what he gives to thee, this Paradise,
And thy fair Eve; Heaven is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
Think only what concerns thee, and thy being;
Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
Live, in what state, condition, or degree;
Contented that thus far hath been reveal'd
Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven.

To whom thus Adam, clear'd of doubt, replied.
How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure
Intelligence of heaven, Angel serene!
And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
The easiest way; nor with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
And not molest us; unless we ourselves
Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain.
But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Uncheck'd, and of her roving is no end;

Till warn'd, or by experience taught, she learn,
That, not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle; but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom: What is more, is fume,
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence;
And renders us, in things that most concern,
Unpractis'd, unprepar'd, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise
Of something not unseasonable to ask,
By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deign'd.
Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance: now hear me relate
My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard;
And day is not yet spent: till then thou seest
How subtly to detain thee I devise;
Inviting thee to hear while I relate;
Fond! were it not in hope of thy reply:
For, while I sit with thee, I seem in Heaven;
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
Of sweet repast: they satiate, and soon fill,
Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.
To whom thus Raphael answer'd heavenly meek.
Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also pour'd;
Inward and outward both, his image fair:
Speaking; or mute, all comeliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word, each motion forms;

Nor less think we in Heaven of thee on Earth
Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire
Gladly into the ways of God with Man:
For God, we see, hath honour'd thee, and set
On man his equal love: Say therefore on;
For I that day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,
Far on excursion towards the gates of Hell:
Squar'd in full legion (such command we had)
To see that none thence issued forth a spy,
Or enemy, while God was in his work;
Lest He, incens'd at such eruption bold,
Destruction with creation might have mix'd.
Not that they durst without his leave attempt;
But us He sends upon his high behests
For state, as Sovran King; and to inure
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut,
The dismal gates, and barricado'd strong;
But long ere our approaching heard within
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song,
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
Glad we return'd up to the coasts of light
Ere sabbath evening: so we had in charge.
But thy relation now; for I attend,
Pleas'd with thy words no less than thou with mine.
So spake the Godlike Power, and thus our Sire.
For Man to tell how human life began
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?
Desire with thee still longer to converse
Induc'd me. As new wak'd from soundest sleep,
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,
In balmy sweat; which with his beams the sun
Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward Heaven my wondering eyes I turn'd

And gaz'd awhile the ample sky; till rais'd
By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
Stood on my feet: about me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
Creatures that liv'd and mov'd, and walk'd or flew;
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smil'd
With fragrance, and with joy my heart o'erflow'd.
Myself I then perus'd, and limb by limb
Survey'd; and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigour led:
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
Knew not; to speak I tried, and forthwith spake;
My tongue obey'd, and readily could name
Whate'er I saw. Thou Sun, said I, fair light,
And thou, enlighten'd Earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye Hills, and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods, and Plains,
And ye that live and move, fair Creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?—.
Not of myself;—by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power pre-eminent:
Tell me, how I may know Him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know.—
While thus I call'd, and stray'd I knew not whither,
From where I first drew air, and first beheld
This happy light; when, answer none return'd,
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
Pensive I sat me down: There gentle sleep
First found me, and with soft oppression seiz'd
My drowsed sense, untroubled, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state,
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:

When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
Whose inward apparition gently moved
My fancy to believe I yet had being,
And liv'd: One came, methought, of shape divine,
And said, "Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
First Man, of men innumerable ordain'd
First Father! call'd by thee, I come thy guide
To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepar'd."
So saying, by the hand he took me rais'd,
And over fields and waters, as in air,
Smooth-sliding without step, last led me up
A woody mountain; whose high top was plain,
A circuit wide, enclos'd, with goodliest trees
Planted, with walks and bowers; that what I saw
Of Earth before scarce pleasant seem'd. Each tree,
Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye
Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite
To pluck and eat; whereat I wak'd, and found
Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
Had lively shadow'd: Here had new begun
My wandering, had not He, who was my guide
Up hither, from among the trees appear'd,
Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
In adoration at his feet I fell
Submiss; He rear'd me, and, "Whom thou sought'st I am,"
Said mildly, "Author of all this thou seest
Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:
Of every tree that in the garden grows
Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:
But of the tree whose operation brings
Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,

Amid the garden and the tree of life,
Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
Transgress'd, inevitably thou shalt die,
From that day mortal; and this happy state
Shalt lose, expell'd from hence into a world
Of woe and sorrow." Sternly He pronounc'd
The rigid interdiction, which resounds
Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
Not to incur; but soon his clear aspect
Return'd, and gracious purpose thus renew'd.
" Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
To thee and to thy race I give; as lords
Possess it, and all things that therein live,
Or live in sea or air; beast, fish, and fowl.
In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold
After their kinds; I bring them to receive
From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
With low subjection: understand the same
Of fish within their watery residence,
Nor hither summon'd, since they cannot change
Their element, to draw the thinner air."
As thus He spake, each bird and beast behold
Approaching two and two: these cowering low
With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his wing.
I nam'd them as they pass'd, and understood
Their nature, with such knowledge God endued
My sudden apprehension: But in these
I found not what methought I wanted still;
And to the Heavenly Vision thus presum'd.

O, by what name, for Thou above all these,
Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
Surpassest far my naming; how may I

Adore Thee, Author of this universe,
And all this good to man? for whose wellbeing
So amply, and with hands so liberal,
Thou hast provided all things: But with me
I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness, who can enjoy alone,
Or all enjoying, what contentment find?
Thus I presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
As with a smile more brighten'd, thus replied:
What call'st thou solitude? Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air,
Replenish'd, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee? Know'st thou not
Their language and their ways? They also know,
And reason not contemptibly: With these
Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.
So spake the Universal Lord, and seem'd
So ordering: I, with leave of speech implor'd,
And humble deprecation, thus replied.
Let not my words offend Thee, Heavenly Power;
My Maker, be propitious while I speak.
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
And these inferiour far beneath me set?
Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony, or true delight?
Which must be mutual, in proportion due
Given and receiv'd; but, in disparity
The one intense, the other still remiss,
Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
Tedious alike: Of fellowship I speak
Such as I seek, fit to participate
All rational delight; wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort: They rejoice
Each with their kind, lion with lioness;

So fitly them in pairs thou hast combin'd:
Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.
Whereto the Almighty answer'd, not displeas'd.
A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
Of thy associates, Adam! and wilt taste
No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
What think'st thou, then, of me, and this my state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possess'd
Of happiness, or not, who am Alone
From all eternity; for none I know
Second to me, or like, equal much less.
How have I, then, with whom to hold converse,
Save with the creatures which I made, and those
To me inferiour, infinite descents
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?
He ceas'd; I lowly answer'd. To attain
The highth and depth of thy eternal ways
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things!
Thou in Thyself art perfect, and in Thee
Is no deficience found: Not so is man,
But in degree, the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help,
Or solace his defects. No need that Thou
Should'st propagate, already Infinite;
And through all numbers absolute, though One:
But Man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied,
In unity defective; which requires
Collateral love, and dearest amity.
Thou in Thy secrecy although alone,

Best with Thyself accompanied, seek'st not
Social communication; yet, so pleas'd,
Canst raise Thy creature to what highth Thou wilt
Of union or communion, deified:
I, by conversing, cannot these erect
From prone; nor in their ways complacence find.
Thus I embolden'd spake, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found; which gain'd
This answer from the gracious Voice Divine.
  Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleas'd;
And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone,
Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself;
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,
My image, not imparted to the brute;
Whose fellowship therefore unmeet for thee,
Good reason was thou freely should'st dislike;
And be so minded still: I, ere thou spakest,
Knew it not good for Man to be alone;
And no such company as then thou saw'st
Intended thee; for trial only brought,
To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet:
What next I bring shall please thee, be assur'd,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.
  He ended, or I heard no more; for now
My earthly by his heavenly overpower'd,
Which it had long stood under, strain'd to the highth
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense
Dazzled and spent, sunk down; and sought repair
Of Sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd
By Nature as in aid, and clos'd mine eyes.
Mine eyes he clos'd, but open left the cell
Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,

Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape
Still glorious before whom awake I stood:
Who stooping open'd my left side, and took
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
And life-blood streaming fresh: wide was the wound,
But suddenly with flesh fill'd up and heal'd:
The rib he form'd and fashion'd with his hands:
Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd
And in her looks; which from that time infus'd
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
And into all things from her air inspir'd
The spirit of love and amorous delight.
She disappear'd, and left me dark: I wak'd
To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:
When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
To make her amiable: On she came,
Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen,
And guided by his voice; nor uninform'd
Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites:
Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud:
  This turn hath made amends: Thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
Of all thy gifts! nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself

Before me: Woman is her name; of Man
Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.
She heard me thus; and though divinely brought,
Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but, retir'd,
The more desirable; or, to say all,
Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,
Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turn'd:
I follow'd her; she what was honour knew,
And with obsequious majesty approv'd
My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower
I led her blushing like the morn: All heaven,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selectest influence; the Earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;
Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bade haste the evening star
On his hill-top, to light the bridal lamp.
Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
My story to the sum of earthly bliss,
Which I enjoy; and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed, but such
As, us'd or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement desire; these delicacies,
I mean, of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
Walks, and the melody of birds; but here
Far otherwise, transported I behold,

Transported touch; here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else
Superiour and unmov'd; here only weak
Against the charm of Beauty's powerful glance.
Or Nature fail'd in me, and left some part
Not proof enough such object to sustain;
Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
More than enough; at least on her bestow'd
Too much of ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end
Of Nature her the inferiour, in the mind
And inward faculties, which most excel;
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion given
O'er other creatures: Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanc'd, and like Folly shows;
Authority and Reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and Nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelick plac'd.
To whom the Angel, with contracted brow.
Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part;
Do thou but thine; and be not diffident
Of Wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou

Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
By áttributing over much to things
Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st.
For, what admir'st thou, what transports thee so,
An outside? fair, no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love;
Not thy subjection: Weigh with her thyself;
Then value: Ofttimes nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well manag'd; of that skill the more thou know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
And to realities yield all her shows:
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
So awful, that with honour thou may'st love
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
But if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
Is propagated, seem such dear delight
Beyond all other, think the same vouchsaf'd
To cattle and each beast; which would not be
To them made common and divulg'd, if aught
Therein enjoy'd were worthy to subdue
The soul of man, or passion in him move.
What higher in her society thou find'st
Attractive, human, rational, love still;
In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true love consists not: Love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat
In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause,
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.
To whom thus, half-abash'd, Adam replied.
Neither her outside form'd so fair, nor aught
In procreation common to all kinds

(Though higher of the genial bed by far,
And with mysterious reverence I deem,)
So much delights me, as those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
From all her words and actions mix'd with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of mind, or in us both one soul;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair
More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foil'd,
Who meet with various objects, from the sense
Variously representing; yet still free,
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
To love, thou blam'st me not; for Love, thou say'st,
Leads up to Heaven, is both the way and guide;
Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask:
Love not the heavenly spirits, and how their love
Express they? by looks only? or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?
  To whom the Angel, with a smile that glow'd
Celestial rosy red, Love's proper hue,
Answer'd. Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
Us happy, and without love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st,
(And pure thou wert created,) we enjoy
In eminence; and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars;
Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, union of pure with pure
Desiring, nor restrain'd conveyance need,
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
But I can now no more; the parting sun

Beyond the earth's green Cape[1] and verdant Isles
Hesperian sets, my signal to depart,
Be strong, live happy, and love! But, first of all,
Him, whom to love is to obey, and keep
His great command; take heed lest passion sway
Thy judgment to do aught which else free will
Would not admit: thine, and of all thy sons,
The weal or woe in thee is plac'd; beware!
I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
And all the Blest: Stand fast; to stand or fall
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require;
And all temptation to transgress repel.
So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus
Follow'd with benediction. Since to part,
Go, heavenly Guest, ethereal Messenger,
Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore!
Gentle to me and affable hath been
Thy condescension, and shall be honour'd ever
With grateful memory: Thou to mankind
Be good and friendly still, and oft return!
So parted they; the Angel up to Heaven
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

[1] 'Green Cape:' Cape de Verd.

BOOK IX.

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan, having compassed the earth, with meditated guile returns, as a mist, by night into Paradise; enters into the serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart: Adam consents not, alleging the danger, lest that enemy of whom they were forewarned should attempt her, found alone: Eve, loath to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength; Adam at last yields: the serpent finds her alone: his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking; with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech, and such understanding, not till now; the serpent answers, that by tasting of a certain tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both: Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the tree of knowledge forbidden: the serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments, induces her at length to eat: she, pleased with the taste, deliberates a while whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof: Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her; and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit: the effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No more of talk where God or Angel guest
With Man, as with his friend, familiar us'd
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast; permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblam'd. I now must change
Those notes to tragick; foul distrust and breach
Disloyal on the part of Man, revolt,
And disobedience: on the part of Heaven
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgement given,
That brought into this world a world of woe,

Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
Death's harbinger: Sad task! yet argument
Not less but more heroick than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplex'd the Greek, and Cytherea's son;
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,
And dictates to me slumbering; or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse:
Since first this subject for heroick song
Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late;
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroick deem'd; chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc, fabled knights
In battles feign'd: the better fortitude
Of patience and heroick martyrdom
Unsung; or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, imblazon'd shields,
Impresses quaint,[1] caparisons and steeds,
Bases[2] and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament; then marshall'd feast
Served up in hall with sewers and seneschals;
The skill of artifice or office mean,
Not that which justly gives heroick name
To person or to poem. Me, of these
Nor skill'd nor studious, higher argument
Remains; sufficient of itself to raise

[1] 'Impresses quaint:' devices on the shield.—[2] 'Bases:' mantles worn by knights.

That name, unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depress'd; and much they may, if all be mine,
Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.
The sun was sunk, and after him the star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter
'Twixt day and night, and now from end to end
Night's hemisphere had veil'd the horizon round:
When Satan, who late fled before the threats
Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improv'd
In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless return'd.
By night he fled, and at midnight return'd
From compassing the earth; cautious of day,
Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried
His entrance, and forewarn'd the Cherubim
That kept their watch; thence full of anguish driven,
The space of seven continued nights he rode
With darkness; thrice the equinoctial line
He circled; four times cross'd the car of night
From pole to pole, traversing each colure;[1]
On the eighth return'd; and on the coast averse
From entrance or Cherubic watch, by stealth
Found unsuspected way. There was a place,
Now not, though sin, not time, first wrought the change,
Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
Into a gulf shot under ground, till part
Rose up a fountain by the tree of life:
In with the river sunk and with it rose
Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought
Where to lie hid: sea he had search'd, and land,

[1] 'Colure:' a circle at right angles with the poles of the world.

From Eden over Pontus and the pool
Mæotis, up beyond the river Ob;[1]
Downward as far antarctick: and in length,
West from Orontes[2] to the ocean barr'd
At Darien;[3] thence to the land where flows
Ganges and Indus: Thus the orb he roam'd
With narrow search; and with inspection deep
Consider'd every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles; and found
The Serpent subtlest beast of all the field.
Him after long debate, irresolute
Of thoughts revolv'd, his final sentence chose
Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight; for, in the wily snake
Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,
As from his wit and native subtlety
Proceeding; which, in other beasts observ'd,
Doubt might beget of diabolick power
Active within, beyond the sense of brute.
Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief
His bursting passion into plaints thus pour'd.
O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferr'd
More justly, seat worthier of gods, as built
With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
For what god, after better, worse would build?
Terrestrial Heaven, danced round by other Heavens
That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,
Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,
In thee concentering all their precious beams
Of sacred influence! As God in heaven
Is center, yet extends to all; so thou,

[1] 'Ob:' a river of Russia, near the north pole.—[2] 'Orontes:' a river of Syria.—[3] 'Darien:' the isthmus joining North and South America together.

Centering, receiv'st from all those orbs: in thee,
Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears
Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
Of creatures animate with gradual life
Of growth, sense, reason, all summ'd up in Man.
With what delight could I have walk'd thee round,
If I could joy in aught, sweet interchange
Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crown'd,
Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these
Find place or refuge; and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries; all good to me becomes
Bane, and in Heaven much worse would be my state.
But neither here seek I, no, nor in Heaven
To dwell, unless by mastering Heaven's Supreme;
Nor hope to be myself less miserable
By what I seek, but others to make such
As I, though thereby worse to me redound:
For only in destroying I find ease
To my relentless thoughts; and, him destroyed,
Or won to what may work his utter loss,
For whom all this was made, all this will soon
Follow, as to him link'd in weal or woe;
In woe then; that destruction wide may range:
To me shall be the glory sole among
The infernal Powers, in one day to have marr'd
What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days
Continued making; and who knows how long
Before had been contriving? though perhaps
Not longer than since I, in one night, freed
From servitude inglorious well nigh half
The Angelick name, and thinner left the throng

Of his adorers: He, to be avenged,
And to repair his numbers thus impair'd,
Whether such virtue spent of old now fail'd
More Angels to create, if they at least
Are his created, or, to spite us more,
Determin'd to advance into our room
A creature form'd of earth, and him endow,
Exalted from so base original,
With heavenly spoils, our spoils: What he decreed,
He effected; Man he made, and for him built
Magnificent this world, and earth his seat,
Him lord pronounc'd; and, O indignity!
Subjected to his service angel-wings,
And flaming ministers to watch and tend
Their earthly charge: Of these the vigilance
I dread; and, to elude, thus wrapt in mist
Of midnight vapour glide obscure, and pry
In every bush and brake, where hap may find
The serpent sleeping; in whose mazy folds
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
With gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd
Into a beast; and, mix'd with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the highth of Deity aspir'd!
But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low
As high he soar'd; obnoxious, first or last,
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils:
Let it; I reck not, so it light well aim'd,
Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favourite
Of Heaven, this man of clay, son of despite,

Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker rais'd
From dust: Spite then with spite is best repaid.
So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on
His midnight-search, where soonest he might find
The serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found
In labyrinth of many a round self-roll'd,
His head the midst, well stored with subtile wiles:
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb,
Fearless unfear'd he slept: in at his mouth
The Devil enter'd; and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing, soon inspir'd
With act intelligential; but his sleep
Disturb'd not, waiting close the approach of morn.
Now, when as sacred light began to dawn
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breath'd
Their morning incense, when all things that breathe,
From the Earth's great altar send up silent praise
To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
And join'd their vocal worship to the quire
Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs:
Then commune how that day they best may ply
Their growing work: for much their work outgrew
The hands' despatch of two gardening so wide;
And Eve first to her husband thus began:
Adam, well may we labour still to dress
This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
Our pleasant task enjoin'd; but, till more hands
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,

One night or two with wanton growth derides
Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise,
Or bear what to my mind first thoughts present:
Let us divide our labours; thou where choice
Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
The clasping ivy where to climb; while I,
In yonder spring of roses intermix'd
With myrtle, find what to redress till noon:
For, while so near each other thus all day
Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
Looks intervene and smiles, or objects new
Casual discourse draw on; which intermits
Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
Early, and the hour of supper comes unearn'd:
To whom mild answer Adam thus return'd.
Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
Compare above all living creatures dear!
Well hast thou motion'd, well thy thoughts employ'd
How we might best fulfil the work which here
God hath assign'd us; nor of me shalt pass
Unprais'd; for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd
Labour, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow,
To brute denied, and are of love the food;
Love, not the lowest end of human life.
For not to irksome toil, but to delight,
He made us, and delight to reason join'd.
These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands

Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
Assist us: But, if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
Befall thee sever'd from me; for thou know'st
What hath been warn'd us, what malicious foe
Envying our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find,
His wish and best advantage, us asunder;
Hopeless to circumvent us join'd, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need:
Whether his first design be to withdraw
Our fealty from God, or to disturb
Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoy'd by us excites his envy more;
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects.
The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.
To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus replied.
Offspring of Heaven and Earth, and all Earth's lord!
That such an enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee inform'd I learn,
And from the parting Angel overheard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then return'd at shut of evening flowers.

But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear'st not, being such
As we, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is then thy fear; which plain infers
Thy equal fear, that my firm faith and love
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduc'd;
Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,
Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?
To whom with healing words Adam replied.
Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve!
For such thou art; from sin and blame entire:
Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
The attempt itself, intended by our foe.
For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
The tempted with dishonour foul; suppos'd
Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
Against temptation: Thou thyself with scorn
And anger wouldst resent the offer'd wrong,
Though ineffectual found: misdeem not then,
If such affront I labour to avert
From thee alone, which on us both at once
The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;
Or daring, first on me the assault shall light.
Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn;
Subtle he needs must be who could seduce
Angels; nor think superfluous others' aid.
I from the influence of thy looks receive
Access in every virtue; in thy sight
More wise, more watchful, stronger if need were
Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,

Shame to be overcome or overreach'd,
Would utmost vigour raise, and rais'd unite.
Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
When I am present, and thy trial choose
With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?
So spake domestick Adam in his care
And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought
Less áttributed to her faith sincére,
Thus her reply with accent sweet renew'd.
If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit, straiten'd by a foe,
Subtle or violent, we not endued
Single with like defence, wherever met;
How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
But harm precedes not sin: only our foe,
Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem
Of our integrity: his foul esteem
Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns
Foul on himself; then wherefore shunn'd or fear'd
By us? who rather double honour gain
From his surmise prov'd false; find peace within,
Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event.
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassay'd
Alone, without exteriour help sustain'd?
Let us not then suspect our happy state
Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,
As not secure to single or combin'd.
Frail is our happiness, if this be so,
And Eden were no Eden, thus expos'd.
To whom thus Adam fervently replied.
O Woman, best are all things as the will
Of God ordain'd them: His creating hand
Nothing imperfect or deficient left
Of all that he created, much less Man,

Or aught that might his happy state secure,
Secure from outward force: within himself
The danger lies, yet lies within his power:
Against his will he can receive no harm.
But God left free the will; for what obeys
Reason, is free; and Reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect;
Lest, by some fair-appearing good surpris'd,
She dictate false; and misinform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.
Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins
That I should mind thee oft; and mind thou me.
Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve;
Since Reason not impossibly may meet
Some specious object by the foe suborn'd,
And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warn'd.
Seek not temptation then, which to avoid
Were better, and most likely if from me
Thou sever not: Trial will come unsought.
Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve
First thy obedience; the other who can know,
Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
But if thou think, trial unsought may find
Us both securer than thus warn'd thou seem'st,
Go, for thy stay, not free, absents thee more;
Go in thy native innocence; rely
On what thou hast of virtue; summon all!
For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine.
So spake the patriarch of mankind; but Eve
Persisted; yet submiss, though last, replied:
With thy permission, then, and thus forewarn'd,
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touch'd only; that our trial, when least sought,

May find us both perhaps far less prepar'd,
The willinger I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud will first the weaker seek;
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.
Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew; and, like a Wood-Nymph light,
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's[1] train,
Betook her to the groves; but Delia's self
In gait surpass'd, and goddess-like deport,
Though not as she with bow and quiver arm'd,
But with such gardening tools as Art yet rude,
Guiltless of fire, had form'd, or Angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona,[2] thus adorn'd,
Likest she seem'd Pomona when she fled
Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.
Her long with ardent look his eye pursued
Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
Oft he to her his charge of quick return
Repeated; she to him as oft engag'd
To be return'd by noon amid the bower,
And all things in best order to invite
Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
O much deceiv'd, much failing, hapless Eve,
Of thy presumed return! event perverse!
Thou never from that hour in Paradise
Found'st either sweet repast or sound repose;
Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,
Waited with hellish rancour imminent
To intercept thy way, or send thee back,
Despoil'd of innocence, of faith, of bliss.
For now, and since first break of dawn, the Fiend,

[1] 'Delia:' Diana.—[2] 'Pales, Pomona, Ceres:' heathen goddesses, presiding over fruits, gardening, and husbandry.

Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come;
And on his quest, where likeliest he might find
The only two of mankind, but in them
The whole included race, his purpos'd prey,
In bower and field he sought, where any tuft
Of grove or garden plot more pleasant lay,
Their tendance, or plantation for delight;
By fountain or by shady rivulet
He sought them both, but wish'd his hap might find
Eve separate; he wish'd, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanc'd; when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veil'd in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the roses bushing round
About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
Each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
Hung drooping unsustain'd; them she upstays
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
Nearer he drew, and many a walk travérs'd
Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;
Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,
Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers
Imborder'd on each bank, the hand of Eve:
Spot more delicious than those gardens[1] feign'd,
Or of revived Adonis, or renown'd
Alcinous,[2] host of old Laertes' son;
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king[3]
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.

[1] 'Gardens of Adonis:' small earthen pots of lettuces carried at the festivals in honour of Adonis.—[2] 'Alcinous:' see the *Odyssey*.—[3] 'Sapient king:' Solomon.

Much he the place admir'd, the person more.
As one who long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight;
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound;
If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more;
She most, and in her look sums all delight:
Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone: Her heavenly form
Angelick, but more soft and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture or least action, overaw'd
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereav'd
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
That space the Evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remain'd
Stupidly good; of enmity disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge:
But the hot Hell that always in him burns,
Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure not for him ordain'd; then soon
Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites.
"Thoughts, whither have ye led me! with what sweet
Compulsion thus transported, to forget
What hither brought us! hate, not love; nor hope
Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
Of pleasure; but all pleasure to destroy,

Save what is in destroying; other joy
To me is lost. Then, let me not let pass
Occasion which now smiles; behold alone
The woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroick built, though of terrestrial mould;
Foe not informidable! exempt from wound,
I not; so much hath Hell debas'd, and pain
Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven.
She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods!
Not terrible, though terrour be in love[1]
And beauty, not approach'd by stronger hate,
Hate stronger under show of love well feign'd;
The way which to her ruin now I tend.
So spake the enemy of mankind enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad! and toward Eve
Address'd his way: not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since; but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds that tower'd
Fold above fold, a surging maze! his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnish'd neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape
And lovely; never since of serpent-kind
Lovelier; not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus,[2] or the god
In Epidaurus;[3] nor to which transform'd

[1] 'Terrour be in love,' &c.: *i. e.*, a beautiful woman begets terror, unless you approach her with a hatred that overpowers fear.—[2] 'Hermione and Cadmus' were changed into serpents for having slain one sacred to Mars.—[3] 'God in Epidaurus:' Esculapius, who was worshipped there.

Ammonian Jove,[1] or Capitoline,[2] was seen;
He with Olympias; this with her who bore
Scipio, the highth of Rome. With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access, but fear'd
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river's mouth, or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail:
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curl'd many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
To lure her eye; she, busied, heard the sound
Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as us'd
To such disport before her through the field,
From every beast; more duteous at her call
Than at Circean call the herd disguis'd.
He, bolder now, uncall'd before her stood,
But as in gaze admiring: oft he bow'd
His turret crest, and sleek enamell'd neck,
Fawning; and lick'd the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expression turn'd at length
The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad
Of her attention gain'd, with serpent-tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal air,
His fraudulent temptation thus began:
  Wonder not, sovran Mistress, if perhaps
Thou canst, who art sole wonder! much less arm
Thy looks, the Heaven of mildness, with disdain,
Displeas'd that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate; I thus single; nor have fear'd
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retir'd.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine

[1] 'Ammonian Jove:' pretended father of Alexander the Great.—[2] 'Capitoline:' pretended father of Scipio Africanus.

By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
With ravishment beheld! there best beheld,
Where universally admir'd; but here
In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who should be seen
A goddess among gods, ador'd and serv'd
By Angels numberless, thy daily train.
So gloz'd the Tempter, and his proem tun'd:
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,
Not unamaz'd, she thus in answer spake.
What may this mean? language of man pronounc'd
By tongue of brute, and human sense express'd?
The first, at least, of these I thought denied
To beasts; whom God, on their creation-day,
Created mute to all articulate sound:
The latter I demur; for in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field
I knew, but not with human voice endued;
Redouble then this miracle, and say
How cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how
To me so friendly grown above the rest
Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
Say, for such wonder claims attention due.
To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied.
Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve!
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command'st; and right thou should'st be obey'd:
I was at first as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food; nor aught but food discern'd

Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:
Till, on a day roving the field, I chanc'd
A goodly tree far distant to behold,
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix'd,
Ruddy and gold: I nearer drew to gaze;
When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleas'd my sense
Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats
Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,
Unsuck'd of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolv'd
Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,
Powerful persuaders, quicken'd at the scent
Of that alluring fruit, urg'd me so keen.
About the mossy trunk I wound me soon;
For, high from ground, the branches would require
Thy utmost reach or Adam's: Round the tree
All other beasts that saw, with like desire
Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
I spar'd not; for, such pleasure till that hour,
At feed or fountain, never had I found.
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason in my inward power; and speech
Wanted not long; though to this shape retain'd.
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
I turn'd my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Consider'd all things visible in Heaven,
Or Earth, or Middle; all things fair and good:
But all that fair and good in thy divine
Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,

United I beheld; no fair to thine
Equivalent or second; which compell'd
Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
And gaze, and worship thee of right declar'd
Sovran of creatures, universal Dame!
So talk'd the spirited sly Snake; and Eve,
Yet more amaz'd, unwary thus replied.
Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
The virtue of that fruit, in thee first prov'd:
But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far?
For many are the trees of God that grow
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown
To us; in such abundance lies our choice,
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouch'd,
Still hanging incorruptible, till men
Grow up to their provision, and more hands
Help to disburden Nature of her birth.
To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad.
Empress, the way is ready, and not long;
Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
Of blowing myrrh and balm: if thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon.
Lead then, said Eve. He, leading, swiftly roll'd
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest; as when a wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends,
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amaz'd night wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,

There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far.
So glister'd the dire Snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
Of prohibition, root of all our woe;
Which, when she saw, thus to her guide she spake.
  Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
The credit of whose virtue rest with thee;
Wonderous indeed, if cause of such effects.
But of this tree we may not taste nor touch;
God so commanded, and left that command
Sole daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
Law to ourselves; our reason is our law.
  To whom the Tempter guilefully replied.
Indeed? hath God then said that of the fruit
Of all these garden trees ye shall not eat,
Yet lords declared of all in earth or air?
To whom thus Eve, yet sinless. Of the fruit
Of each tree in the garden we may eat;
But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
The garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
  She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold
The Tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on; and, as to passion mov'd,
Fluctuates disturb'd, yet comely and in act
Rais'd, as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renown'd,
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourish'd, since mute! to some great cause address'd,
Stood in himself collected; while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue;
Sometimes in highth began, as no delay

Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right:
So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown,
The Tempter, all impassion'd, thus began.
O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving Plant,
Mother of science! now I feel thy power
Within me clear; not only to discern
Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deem'd however wise.
Queen of this universe! do not believe
Those rigid threats of death: ye shall not die:
How should you? By the fruit? it gives you life
To knowledge; by the threatener? look on me,
Me, who have touch'd and tasted; yet both live,
And life more perfect have attain'd than Fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast
Is open? or will God incense his ire
For such a petty trespass? and not praise
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounc'd, whatever thing death be,
Deterr'd not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil;
Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunn'd?
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;
Not just, not God; not fear'd then, nor obey'd:
Your fear itself of death removes the fear.
Why then was this forbid? Why, but to awe?
Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshippers? He knows that in the day
Ye eat thereof, your eyes, that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Open'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as gods,
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.

That ye shall be as gods, since I as man,
Internal man, is but proportion meet;
I, of brute, human; ye, of human, gods.
So ye shall die, perhaps, by putting off
Human, to put on gods; death to be wish'd,
Though threaten'd, which no worse than this can bring.
And what are gods, that man may not become
As they, participating God-like food?
The gods are first, and that advantage use
On our belief, that all from them proceeds:
I question it; for this fair earth I see,
Warm'd by the sun, producing every kind;
Them, nothing: if they all things, who enclos'd
Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,
That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains
Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies
The offence, that man should thus attain to know?
What can your knowledge hurt him, or this tree
Impart against his will, if all be his?
Or is it envy? and can envy dwell
In heavenly breasts? These, these, and many more
Causes, import your need of this fair fruit.
Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste.
He ended; and his words, replete with guile,
Into her heart too easy entrance won:
Fix'd on the fruit she gaz'd, which to behold
Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and wak'd
An eager appetite, raised by the smell
So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,

Solicited her longing eye; yet first
Pausing awhile, thus to herself she mus'd.
Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,
Though kept from man, and worthy to be admir'd;
Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise:
Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use
Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree
Of knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;
Forbids us then to taste! but his forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers the good
By thee communicated, and our want:
For good unknown, sure is not had; or, had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
In plain then, what forbids he but to know,
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
Such prohibitions bind not. But, if death
Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!
How dies the Serpent? he hath eat'n and lives,
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational till then. For us alone
Was death invented? or to us denied
This intellectual food, for beasts reserv'd?
For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first
Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy
The good befallen him, author unsuspect,
Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I then? rather, what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good and evil,
Of God or death, of law or penalty?
Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,

Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue to make wise: What hinders, then,
To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?
So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she eat!
Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty Serpent; and well might; for Eve,
Intent now wholly on her taste, nought else
Regarded; such delight till then, as seem'd,
In fruit she never tasted, whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge; nor was Godhead from her thought.
Greedily she ingorg'd without restraint,
And knew not eating death: Satiate at length,
And highten'd as with wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself she pleasingly began.
O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees
In Paradise! of operation blest
To sapience, hitherto obscur'd, infam'd,
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created; but henceforth my early care,
Not without song, each morning, and due praise,
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches offer'd free to all;
Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
In knowledge, as the gods, who all things know;
Though others envy what they cannot give:
For had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,
Best guide; not following thee, I had remain'd
In ignorance; thou open'st Wisdom's way,
And giv'st access, though secret she retire.

And I perhaps am secret: Heaven is high,
High, and remote to see from thence distinct
Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
May have diverted from continual watch
Our Great Forbidder, safe with all his spies
About him. But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with me? or rather not,
But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
Without copartner? so to add what wants
In female sex, the more to draw his love,
And render me more equal; and perhaps,
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superiour; for, inferiour, who is free?
This may be well: But what if God have seen,
And death ensue? then I shall be no more!
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
A death to think! Confirm'd then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life.
So saying, from the tree her step she turn'd;
But first low reverence done, as to the Power
That dwelt within, whose presence had infus'd
Into the plant sciential sap, deriv'd
From nectar, drink of gods. Adam the while,
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn
Her tresses, and her rural labours crown;
As reapers oft are wont their harvest queen.
Great joy he promis'd to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, so long delay'd;

Yet oft his heart, divine of[1] something ill,
Misgave him; he the faltering measure[2] felt;
And forth to meet her went, the way she took
That morn when first they parted; by the tree
Of knowledge he must pass; there he her met,
Scarce from the tree returning; in her hand
A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smil'd,
New gather'd, and ambrosial smell diffus'd.
To him she hasted; in her face excuse
Came prologue, and apology too prompt;
Which, with bland words at will, she thus address'd.
  Hast thou not wonder'd, Adam, at my stay?
Thee I have miss'd, and thought it long, depriv'd
Thy presence; agony of love till now
Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more
Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:
This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
Opening the way, but of divine effect
To open eyes, and make them gods who taste;
And hath been tasted such: The serpent wise,
Or not restrain'd as we, or not obeying,
Hath eaten of the fruit; and is become,
Not dead, as we are threaten'd, but thenceforth
Endued with human voice and human sense,
Reasoning to admiration; and with me
Persuasively hath so prevail'd, that I
Have also tasted, and have also found
The effects to correspond; opener mine eyes,
Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,

[1] 'Divine of:' foreboding.—[2] 'Faltering measure:' unequal beatings of heart and pulse.

And growing up to Godhead; which for thee
Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss;
Tedious, unshar'd with thee, and odious soon.
Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot
May join us, equal joy, as equal love;
Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit.
Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;
But in her cheek distemper flushing glow'd.
On the other side Adam, soon as he heard
The fatal trespass done by Eve, amaz'd,
Astonied stood, and blank, while horrour chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd;
From his slack hand the garland wreath'd for Eve
Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed:
Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
First to himself he inward silence broke.
O fairest of Creation, last and best
Of all God's works, Creature in whom excell'd
Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost,
Defac'd, deflower'd, and now to death devote!
Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
The strict forbiddence, how to violate
The sacred fruit forbidd'n! Some cursed fraud
Of enemy hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,
And me with thee hath ruin'd; for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die:
How can I live without thee! how forego
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn!

Should God create another Eve, and I
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart: no, no! I feel
The link of Nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.
So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and after thoughts disturb'd
Submitting to what seem'd remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turn'd.
Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,
And peril great provoked, who thus hast dar'd,
Had it been only coveting to eye
That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinence,
Much more to taste it under ban to touch.
But past who can recall, or done undo?
Not God omnipotent, nor Fate; yet so
Perhaps thou shalt not die, perhaps the fact
Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit,
Profan'd first by the serpent, by him first
Made common, and unhallow'd, ere our taste;
Nor yet on him found deadly; he yet lives,
Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as Man,
Higher degree of life; inducement strong
To us, as likely tasting to attain
Proportional ascent; which cannot be
But to be gods, or angels, demigods.
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
Us his prime creatures, dignified so high,
Set over all his works; which in our fall,
For us created, needs with us must fail,
Dependent made: so God shall uncreate,
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose;

Not well conceiv'd of God, who, though his power
Creation could repeat, yet would be loath
Us to abolish, lest the Adversary
Triumph, and say, "Fickle their state whom God
Most favours; who can please him long? Me first
He ruin'd, now Mankind; whom will he next?"
Matter of scorn, not to be given the Foe.
However, I with thee have fix'd my lot,
Certain to undergo like doom: If death
Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of Nature draw me to my own;
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
Our state cannot be sever'd; we are one,
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.
So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied.
O glorious trial of exceeding love,
Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate; but, short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
This day affords, declaring thee resolv'd
Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
Shall separate us, link'd in love so dear,
To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;
Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
Direct, or by occasion) hath presented
This happy trial of thy love, which else
So eminently never had been known?
Were it I thought death menac'd would ensue
This my attempt, I would sustain alone

The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die
Deserted, than oblige[1] thee with a fact
Pernicious to thy peace; chiefly assur'd
Remarkably so late of thy so true,
So faithful, love unequall'd: but I feel
Far otherwise the event; not death, but life
Augmented, open'd eyes, new hopes, new joys,
Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
Hath touch'd my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
And fear of death deliver to the winds.
So saying, she embrac'd him, and for joy
Tenderly wept; much won, that he his love
Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur
Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
In recompence (for such compliance bad
Such recompence best merits), from the bough
She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat,
Against his better knowledge; not deceiv'd,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;
Sky lower'd; and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original: while Adam took no thought,
Eating his fill; nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass fear'd, the more to soothe
Him with her lov'd society; that now,
As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings,
Wherewith to scorn the earth: But that false fruit

[1] 'Oblige:' in its old sense of rendering obnoxious to punishment.

Far other operation first display'd,
Carnal desire inflaming; he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
As wantonly repaid: in lust they burn:
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move.
Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
And elegant, of sapience no small part;
Since to each meaning savour we apply,
And palate call judicious: I the praise
Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purvey'd.
Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstain'd
From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
True relish, tasting; if such pleasure be
In things to us forbidd'n, it might be wish'd
For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
But come, so well refresh'd, now let us play,
As meet is, after such delicious fare;
For never did thy beauty, since the day
I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorn'd
With all perfections, so inflame my sense
With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever; bounty of this virtuous tree!
So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous intent; well understood
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
Her hand he seiz'd; and to a shady bank,
Thick overhead with verdant roof imbower'd,
He led her nothing loth; flowers were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinth; Earth's freshest, softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love's disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
The solace of their sin; till dewy sleep
Oppress'd them, wearied with their amorous play.

Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapour bland
About their spirits had play'd, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhal'd; and grosser sleep,
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Incumber'd, now had left them; up they rose
As from unrest; and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how open'd, and their minds
How darken'd; innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone;
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour, from about them, naked left
To guilty Shame: he covered, but his robe
Uncover'd more. So rose the Danite strong,
Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap
Of Philistéan Dèlilah, and wak'd
Shorn of his strength. They destitute and bare
Of all their virtue: Silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute;
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abash'd,
At length gave utterance to these words constrain'd.
O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit Man's voice; true in our fall,
False in our promised rising; since our eyes
Open'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil; good lost, and evil got;
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know;
Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store;
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first

Be sure then.—How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze,
Insufferably bright. O might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscur'd, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening: Cover me, ye Pines!
Ye Cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more!—
But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
What best may for the present serve to hide
The parts of each from other that seem most
To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen;
Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together sew'd,
And girded on our loins, may cover round
Those middle parts; that this new-comer, Shame,
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.
So counsell'd he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood; there soon they chose
The fig-tree; not that kind for fruit renown'd,
But such[1] as at this day, to Indians known
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms,
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade
High over-arch'd, and echoing walks between:
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loopholes cut through thickest shade: Those leaves
They gather'd, broad as Amazonian targe;
And, with what skill they had, together sew'd,

[1] 'But such,' &c.: namely, the banyan tree.

To gird their waist; vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike
To that first naked glory! Such of late
Columbus found the American, so girt
With feather'd cincture; naked else, and wild
Among the trees, on isles and woody shores.
Thus fenc'd, and, as they thought, their shame in part
Cover'd, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep; nor only tears
Rain'd at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord; and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tost and turbulent:
For Understanding rul'd not, and the Will
Heard not her lore; both in subjection now
To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath,
Usurping, over sovran Reason claim'd
Superiour sway: From thus distemper'd breast,
Adam, estrang'd in look, and alter'd style,
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renew'd.

Would thou hadst hearken'd to my words, and stay'd
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wandering this unhappy morn,
I know not whence possess'd thee; we had then
Remain'd still happy; not, as now, despoil'd
Of all our good, sham'd, naked, miserable!
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The faith they owe: when earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.

To whom, soon mov'd with touch of blame, thus Eve.
What words have pass'd thy lips, Adam severe!
Imputest thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows

But might as ill have happened, thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discern'd
Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spake;
No ground of enmity between us known,
Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm.
Was I to have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger, as thou saidst?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay;
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fix'd in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgress'd, nor thou with me.
To whom, then first incens'd, Adam replied.
Is this the love, is this the recompence
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve! express'd
Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I;
Who might have lived, and 'joyed immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
And am I now upbraided as the cause
Of thy transgressing? Not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint: What could I more?
I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, foretold
The danger, and the lurking enemy
That lay in wait; beyond this had been force;
And force upon free will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on, secure
Either to meet no danger, or to find
Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps
I also err'd, in overmuch admiring
What seem'd in thee so perfect, that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee; but I rue

That errour now, which is become my crime, 1181
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him who, to worth in women overtrusting,
Lets her will rule; restraint she will not brook;
And left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his weak indulgence will accuse.
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contést appeared no end.

BOOK X.

THE ARGUMENT

Man's trangression known, the guardian angels forsake Paradise, and return up to heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors; who descends and gives sentence accordingly; then in pity clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new world, and the sin by man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in hell, but to follow Satan their sire up to the place of man: to make the way easier from hell to this world to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made; then preparing for earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium; in full assembly relates with boasting his success against man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed with himself also suddenly into serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise; then, deluded with a show of the forbidden tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death; God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but, for the present, commands his angels to make several alterations in the heavens and elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolement of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him; then to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not; but conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the serpent; and exhorts her with him to seek peace of the offended Deity, by repentance and supplication.

MEANWHILE the heinous and despiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise; and how
He, in the serpent, had perverted Eve,
Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
Was known in Heaven; for what can 'scape the eye
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
Omniscient? who in all things wise and just,

Hinder'd not Satan to attempt the mind
Of man, with strength entire and free-will arm'd,
Complete to have discover'd and repuls'd,
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still remember'd
The high injunction not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying,
Incurr'd (what could they less?) the penalty;
And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.
Up into Heaven, from Paradise, in haste
The Angelick guards ascended, mute, and sad
For Man; for of his state by this they knew,
Much wondering how the subtle Fiend had stolen
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news
From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeas'd
All were who heard: dim sadness did not spare
That time celestial visages, yet, mix'd
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new arriv'd, in multitudes
The ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befel: They towards the throne supreme,
Accountable, made haste, to make appear,
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,
And easily approv'd: when the Most High
Eternal Father, from his secret cloud
Amidst, in thunder utter'd thus his voice.
Assembled Angels, and ye Powers return'd
From unsuccessful charge; be not dismay'd,
Nor troubled at these tidings from the earth,
Which your sincerest care could not prevent;
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
When first this tempter cross'd the gulf from Hell.
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed
On his bad errand; Man should be seduc'd,

And flatter'd out of all, believing lies
Against his Maker; no decree of mine
Concurring to necessitate his fall,
Or touch with lightest moment of impúlse
His free will, to her own inclining left
In even scale. But fallen he is; and now
What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass
On his transgression, death denounc'd that day?
Which he presumes already vain and void,
Because not yet inflicted, as he fear'd,
By some immediate stroke; but soon shall find
Forbearance no acquittance, ere day end.
Justice shall not return as bounty scorn'd.
But whom send I to judge them? Whom but thee,
Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferr'd
All judgement, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.
Easy it may be seen that I intend
Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee,
Man's friend, his Mediator, his design'd
Both ransom and Redeemer voluntary,
And destin'd Man himself, to judge Man fallen.
So spake the Father, and, unfolding bright
Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
Blaz'd forth unclouded Deity: He full
Resplendent all his Father manifest
Express'd, and thus divinely answer'd mild.
Father Eternal, thine is to decree;
Mine, both in Heaven and Earth, to do thy will
Supreme; that thou in me, thy Son beloved,
May'st ever rest well pleas'd. I go to judge
On Earth these thy transgressors; but thou know'st,
Whoever judg'd, the worst on me must light
When time shall be; for so I undertook
Before thee; and, not repenting, this obtain

Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
On me deriv'd: yet I shall temper so
Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most
Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
Are to behold the judgement, but the judg'd,
Those two; the third, best absent, is condemn'd,
Convict by flight, and rebel to all law:
Conviction to the serpent none belongs.

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose,
Of high collateral glory: Him Thrones, and Powers,
Princedoms, and Dominations ministrant,
Accompanied to Heaven-gate; from whence
Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay.
Down he descended straight: the speed of gods
Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes wing'd.
Now was the sun in western cadence low
From noon, and gentle airs, due at their hour,
To fan the earth now wak'd, and usher in
The evening cool; when he, from wrath more cool,
Came, the mild Judge and Intercessour both,
To sentence Man: The voice of God they heard,
Now walking in the garden, by soft winds
Brought to their ears while day declin'd; they heard,
And from his presence hid themselves among
The thickest trees, both man and wife; till God
Approaching, thus to Adam call'd aloud.

Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet
My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,
Not pleased, thus entertain'd with solitude,
Where obvious duty erewhile appear'd unsought:
Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth!

He came, and with him Eve, more loth, though first

To offend; discountenanc'd both, and discompos'd:
Love was not in their looks, either to God
Or to each other; but apparent guilt,
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.
Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answered brief.
I heard thee in the garden, and of thy voice
Afraid, being naked, hid myself. To whom
The gracious Judge, without revile, replied.
My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not fear'd,
But still rejoic'd; how is it now become
So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked, who
Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the tree,
Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?
To whom thus Adam, sore beset, replied.
O Heaven! in evil straight this day I stand
Before my Judge; either to undergo
Myself the total crime, or to accuse
My other self, the partner of my life;
Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
I should conceal, and not expose to blame
By my complaint; but strict necessity
Subdues me, and calamitous constraint;
Lest on my head both sin and punishment
However insupportable, be all
Devolv'd: though, should I hold my peace, yet thou
Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.—
This Woman, whom thou mad'st to be my help,
And gav'st me as thy perfect gift, so good,
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
That from her hand I could suspect no ill,
And what she did, whatever in itself,
Her doing seem'd to justify the deed;
She gave me of the tree and I did eat.

To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied.
Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
Before His voice? or was she made thy guide,
Superiour, or but equal, that to her
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee
And for thee, whose perfection far excell'd
Hers in all real dignity? Adorn'd
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
Were such as under government well seem'd;
Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part
And person, hadst thou known thyself aright.
So having said, he thus to Eve in few.
Say, Woman, what is this which thou hast done?
To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelm'd,
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge
Bold or loquacious, thus abash'd replied.
The Serpent me beguil'd, and I did eat.
Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
To judgement he proceeded on the accus'd
Serpent, though brute: unable to transfer
The guilt on him who made him instrument
Of mischief, and polluted from the end
Of his creation; justly, then, accurs'd,
As vitiated in nature: More to know
Concern'd not man (since he no further knew),
Nor alter'd his offence; yet God at last
To Satan first in sin his doom applied,
Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best:
And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall.
Because thou hast done this, thou art accurs'd
Above all cattle, each beast of the field;
Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,

And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
Between thee and the woman I will put
Enmity, and between thine and her seed;
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.
So spake this Oracle, then verified
When Jesus, Son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall, like lightning, down from Heaven,
Prince of the air; then rising from his grave,
Spoil'd Principalities and Powers, triumph'd
In open show; and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the air,
The realm itself of Satan, long usurp'd;
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet,
Even he who now foretold his fatal bruise;
And to the Woman thus his sentence turn'd.
Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth; and to thy husband's will
Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule.
On Adam last thus judgement he pronounc'd.
Because thou hast hearken'd to the voice of thy wife,
And eaten of the tree, concerning which
I charg'd thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat thereof;
Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thou in sorrow
Shalt eat thereof, all the days of thy life;
Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
Unbid; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field;
In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
Till thou return unto the ground; for thou
Out of the ground wast taken; know thy birth,
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return.
So judged he man, both Judge and Saviour sent;
And the instant stroke of death, denounc'd that day,
Remov'd far off; then, pitying how they stood

Before him naked to the air, that now
Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume;
As when he wash'd his servants' feet;[1] so now,
As father of his family, he clad
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,
Or as the snake with youthful coat repaid;
And thought not much to clothe his enemies:
Nor he their outward only with the skins
Of beast, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness
Arraying, covered from his Father's sight.
To Him with swift ascent he up return'd,
Into his blissful bosom reassum'd
In glory, as of old; to Him appeas'd
All, though all-knowing, what had pass'd with Man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.
Meanwhile, ere thus was sinn'd and judg'd on earth,
Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,
In counterview within the gates, that now
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
Far into Chaos, since the Fiend pass'd through,
Sin opening; who thus now to Death began.
O Son, why sit we here each other viewing
Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives
In other worlds, and happier seat provides
For us his offspring dear? It cannot be
But that success attends him: if mishap,
Ere this he had return'd, with fury driven
By his avengers; since no place like this
Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
Wings growing, and dominion given me large

[1] 'Wash'd his servants' feet:' his disciples. See John xiii. 5.

Beyond this deep; whatever draws me on,
Or sympathy, or some connatural force,
Powerful at greatest distance to unite,
With secret amity, things of like kind,
By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade
Inseparable, must with me along:
For Death from Sin no power can separate.
But, lest the difficulty of passing back
Stay his return, perhaps, over this gulph
Impassable, impervious; let us try
Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine
Not unagreeable, to found a path
Over this main from Hell to that new world,
Where Satan now prevails; a monument
Of merit high to all the infernal host,
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse,
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
By this new-felt attraction and instinct.

Whom thus the meager Shadow answer'd soon.
Go whither Fate and inclination strong
Leads thee: I shall not lag behind, nor err
The way, thou leading; such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savour of death from all things there that live:
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid.

So saying, with delight he snuff'd the smell
Of mortal change on earth. As when a flock
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
Against the day of battle, to a field
Where armies lie encamp'd come flying, lur'd
With scent of living carcasses design'd
For death, the following day, in bloody fight:

So scented the grim Feature, and upturn'd
His nostril wide into the murky air;
Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
Then both, from out Hell-gates, into the waste
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
Flew diverse; and with power (their power was great)
Hovering upon the waters, what they met
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
Toss'd up and down, together crowded drove,
From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell,
As when two polar winds, blowing adverse
Upon the Cronian sea,[1] together drive
Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way
Beyond Petsora[2] eastward, to the rich
Cathaian coast.[3] The aggregated soil
Death, with his mace petrifick, cold and dry,
As with a trident, smote, and fix'd as firm
As Delos,[4] floating once: the rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move;
And with Asphaltic slime, broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of hell the gather'd beach
They fasten'd, and the mole immense wrought on
Over the foaming deep high-arch'd, a bridge
Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
Immovable of this now fenceless world,
Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad,
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.
So, if great things to small may be compar'd,
Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
From Susa,[5] his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the sea; and, over Hellespont

[1] 'Cronian sea:' the northern frozen sea.—[2] 'Petsora:' the most north-eastern province of Russia.—[3] 'Cathaian coast:' the northern part of China.—[4] 'Delos:' an island in the Archipelago.—[5] 'Susa:' called the palace, and Memnonia.

Bridging his way, Europe with Asia join'd,
And scourg'd with many a stroke the indignant waves.
Now had they brought the work, by wonderous art
Pontifical,[1] a ridge of pendent rock,
Over the vex'd abyss, following the track
Of Satan, to the self-same place where he
First lighted from his wing, and landed safe
From out of Chaos, to the outside bare
Of this round World: With pins of adamant
And chains they made all fast, too fast they made
And durable; And now in little space
The confines met of empyréan Heaven,
And of this world; and on the left hand, Hell
With long reach interpos'd: three several ways
In sight, to each of these three places led.
And now their way to Earth they had descried,
To Paradise first tending; when, behold!
Satan in likeness of an Angel bright,
Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion[2] steering
His zenith, while the sun in Aries rose:
Disguis'd he came; but those his children dear
Their parent soon discern'd, though in disguise.
He, after Eve seduc'd, unminded slunk
Into the wood fast by; and, changing shape
To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
Upon her husband; saw their shame that sought
Vain covertures; but when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrified
He fled; not hoping to escape, but shun
The present; fearing, guilty, what his wrath

[1] 'Pontifical:' the art of building bridges.—[2] 'Centaur and Scorpion:' farthest removed from Aries, where the sun then was; and Satan wishing to keep as far as possible from the sun, and Uriel its regent.

Might suddenly inflict; that past return'd
By night, and, listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
Thence gather'd his own doom; which understood,
Not instant, but of future time, with joy
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now return'd;
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wonderous pontifice, unhop'd
Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendous bridge his joy encreas'd.
Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair
Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke.
O Parent, these are thy magnifick deeds,
Thy trophies! which thou view'st as not thine own;
Thou art their author and prime architect:
For I no sooner in my heart divin'd,
My heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, join'd in connexion sweet,
That thou on earth hadst prosper'd, which thy looks
Now also evidence, but straight I felt,
Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt,
That I must after thee, with this thy son;
Such fatal consequence unites us three!
Hell could no longer hold us in our bounds,
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
Detain from following thy illustrious track.
Thou hast achieved our liberty, confin'd
Within Hell-gates till now: thou hast impower'd
To fortify thus far, and overlay,
With this portentous bridge, the dark abyss.
Thine now is all this world; thy virtue hath won
What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gain'd
With odds what war hath lost, and full aveng'd

Our foil in Heaven: here thou shalt monarch reign,
There didst not: there let him still victor sway,
As battle hath adjudg'd; from this new world
Retiring, by his own doom alienated;
And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,
His quadrature,[1] from thy orbicular world;
Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne.

Whom thus the Prince of darkness answer'd glad.
Fair Daughter, and thou Son and Grandchild both;
High proof ye now have given to be the race
Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
Antagonist of Heaven's Almighty King),
Amply have merited of me, of all
The infernal empire, that, so near Heaven's door
Triumphal with triumphal act have met,
Mine, with this glorious work; and made one realm,
Hell and this world, one realm, one continent
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I
Descend through darkness, on your road with ease,
To my associate Powers, them to acquaint
With these successes, and with them rejoice;
You two this way, among these numerous orbs,
All yours, right down to Paradise descend;
There dwell, and reign in bliss: thence on the earth
Dominion exercise and in the air,
Chiefly on Man, sole lord of all declar'd;
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
My substitutes I send ye, and create
Plenipotent on earth, of matchless might
Issuing from me; on your joint vigour now
My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
Through Sin to Death expos'd by my exploit.

[1] 'Quadrature:' See Rev. xxi. 16, 'The city lieth four-square,' &c.

If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell
No detriment need fear; go, and be strong!
So saying he dismiss'd them; they with speed
Their course through thickest constellations held,
Spreading their bane; the blasted stars look'd wan,
And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse
Then suffer'd. The other way Satan went down
The causey to Hell-gate: On either side
Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaim'd,
And with rebounding surge the bars assail'd,
That scorn'd his indignation: Through the gate,
Wide open and unguarded, Satan pass'd
And all about found desolate; for those
Appointed to sit there had left their charge,
Flown to the upper world; the rest were all
Far to the inland retir'd, about the walls
Of Pandemonium; city and proud seat
Of Lucifer, so by allusion call'd
Of that bright star to Satan paragon'd;
There kept their watch the legions, while the Grand
In council sat, solicitous what chance
Might intercept their emperour sent; so he
Departing gave command, and they observ'd.
As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,
By Astracan, over the snowy plains,
Retires; or Bactrian Sophi,[1] from the horns
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
The realm of Aladule,[2] in his retreat
To Tauris or Casbeen:[3] So these, the late
Heaven-banish'd host, left desart utmost Hell
Many a dark league, reduc'd in careful watch

[1] 'Bactrian Sophi:' Persian emperor.—[2] 'Aladule:' the Greater Armenia; called so from its last king, Aladules, who was slain in his retreat to Taurus or Ecbatana.—[3] 'Casbeen:' another great city of Persia.

Round their metropolis; and now expecting
Each hour their great adventurer from the search
Of foreign worlds: He through the midst unmark'd,
In show plebeian Angel militant
Of lowest order, pass'd; and from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
Ascended his high throne; which under state
Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
Was placed in regal lustre. Down a while
He sat, and round about him saw unseen;
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
And shape star-bright appear'd, or brighter; clad
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him, or false glitter: All amaz'd
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
Bent their aspéct, and whom they wish'd beheld,
Their mighty chief return'd: loud was the acclaim:
Forth rush'd in haste the great consulting peers,
Raised from their dark Divan, and with like joy
Congratulant approached him; who with hand
Silence, and with these words attention, won.
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers;
For in possession such, not only of right,
I call ye, and declare ye now; return'd
Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
Triumphant out of this infernal pit
Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,
And dungeon of our tyrant: Now possess,
As lords, a spacious world, to our native Heaven
Little inferiour, by my adventure hard
With peril great achiev'd. Long were to tell
What I have done; what suffer'd; with what pain
Voyag'd the unreal, vast, unbounded deep
Of horrible confusion: over which,

By Sin and Death, a broad way now is pav'd
To expedite your glorious march; but I
Toil'd out my uncouth passage, forc'd to ride
The untractable abyss, plung'd in the womb
Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild;
That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely oppos'd
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
Protesting Fate supreme; thence how I found
The new-created world, which fame in Heaven
Long had foretold, a fabrick wonderful
Of absolute perfection! therein man,
Plac'd in a Paradise, by our exile
Made happy: Him by fraud I have seduc'd
From his Creator; and, the more to encrease
Your wonder, with an apple; he, thereat
Offended, worth your laughter! hath given up
Both his beloved Man, and all his world,
To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,
Without our hazard, labour, or alarm;
To range in, and to dwell, and over Man
To rule, as over all he should have rul'd.
True is, me also hath he judg'd, or rather
Me not, but the brute serpent in whose shape
Man I deceiv'd: that which to me belongs,
Is enmity which he will put between
Me and mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
His seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head:
A world who would not purchase with a bruise,
Or much more grievous pain?—Ye have the account
Of my performance: What remains, ye gods,
But up, and enter now into full bliss?

So having said, a while he stood, expecting
Their universal shout, and high applause,
To fill his ear; when, contrary, he hears

On all sides, from innumerable tongues,
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of publick scorn; he wonder'd, but not long
Had leisure, wondering at himself now more;
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare;
His arms clung to his ribs; his legs entwining
Each other, till supplanted down he fell
A monstrous serpent, on his belly prone
Reluctant, but in vain; a greater power
Now rul'd him, punish'd in the shape he sinn'd.
According to his doom: he would have spoke,
But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue
To forked tongue; for now were all transform'd
Alike, to serpents all, as accessories
To his bold riot: Dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now
With complicated monsters, head and tail,
Scorpion and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire,
Cerastes[1] horn'd, Hydrus,[2] and Elops drear,
And Dipsas;[3] (not so thick swarm'd once the soil
Bedropp'd with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
Ophiusa),[4] but still greatest he the midst,
Now Dragon grown, larger than whom the sun
Engender'd in the Pythian vale or slime,
Huge Python,[5] and his power no less he seem'd
Above the rest still to retain: they all
Him follow'd, issuing forth to the open field,
Where all yet left of that revolted rout,
Heaven-fallen, in station stood or just array;
Sublime with expectation when to see

[1] 'Cerastes:' a horned snake.—[2] 'Hydrus:' the water-snake.—[3] 'Dipsas:' called so, because those stung by it were tormented with incurable thirst.—[4] 'Ophiusa:' a small island in the Mediterranean, infested with serpents.—[5] 'Python:' see *Ovid.*

In triumph issuing forth their glorious Chief;
They saw, but other sight instead! a crowd
Of ugly serpents: horrour on them fell,
And horrid sympathy; for, what they saw,
They felt themselves, now changing: down their arms,
Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast;
And the dire hiss renew'd, and the dire form
Catch'd by contagion; like in punishment,
As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant
Turn'd to exploding hiss, triumph to shame
Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood
A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
His will who reigns above, to aggravate
Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that
Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
Used by the Tempter: on that prospect strange
Their earnest eyes they fix'd, imagining
For one forbidden tree a multitude
Now risen, to work them further woe or shame;
Yet, parch'd with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain;
But on they roll'd in heaps, and, up the trees
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
That curl'd Megæra:[1] greedily they pluck'd
The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flam'd;
This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceiv'd: they, fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chew'd bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected: oft they assay'd,
Hunger and thirst constraining; drugg'd as oft,
With hatefullest disrelish writh'd their jaws,

[1] 'Megæra:' one of the Furies.

With soot and cinders fill'd; so oft they fell
Into the same illusion, not as Man [plagu'd
Whom they triumph'd once lapsed. Thus were they
And worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resum'd;
Yearly enjoin'd, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling certain number'd days,
To dash their pride and joy for Man seduc'd,
However, some tradition they dispers'd
Among the heathen, of their purchase got,
And fabled how the Serpent, whom they call'd
Ophion,[1] with Eurynome, the wide-
Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus; thence by Saturn driven
And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.
  Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived; Sin, there in power before,
Once actual; now in body, and to dwell
Habitual habitant; behind her Death,
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse: To whom sin thus began.
  Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death!
What think'st thou of our empire now, though earn'd
With travel difficult, not better far
Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,
Unnam'd, undreaded, and thyself half-starv'd?
  Whom thus the Sin-born monster answer'd soon:
To me, who with eternal famine pine,
Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven;
There best, where most with ravine I may meet;
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound corps.

[1] 'Ophion and Eurynome' were said to have inhabited Olympus, till expelled by Saturn and Ops. Milton sees in this story a tradition of the fall.

To whom the incestuous mother thus replied.
Thou, therefore, on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
Feed first; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl;
No homely morsels! and whatever thing
The sithe of Time mows down, devour unspar'd;
Till I, in Man residing, through the race,
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect;
And season him thy last and sweetest prey.
This said, they both betook them several ways,
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature
Sooner or later; which the Almighty seeing,
From his transcendent seat the Saints among,
To those bright Orders utter'd thus his voice.
See, with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
To waste and havoc yonder world, which I
So fair and good created; and had still
Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man
Let in these wasteful furies, who impute
Folly to me: so doth the prince of Hell
And his adherents, that with so much ease
I suffer them to enter and possess
A place so heavenly; and, conniving, seem
To gratify my scornful enemies,
That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
At random yielded up to their misrule;
And know not that I call'd, and drew them thither,
My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
Which Man's polluting sin with taint hath shed
On what was pure; till, cramm'd and gorg'd, nigh burst
With suck'd and glutted offal, at one sling
Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
Both Sin and Death, and yawning Grave, at last

Through Chaos hurl'd, obstruct the mouth of Hell
For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
Then Heaven and Earth renew'd shall be made pure
To sanctity, that shall receive no stain:
Till then, the curse pronounced on both proceeds.
He ended, and the heavenly Audience loud
Sung Halleluiah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung: Just are Thy ways,
Righteous are Thy decrees on all Thy works;
Who can extenuate Thee? Next, to the Son,
Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom
New Heaven and Earth shall to the ages rise,
Or down from Heaven descend.—Such was their song;
While the Creator, calling forth by name
His mighty Angels, gave them several charge,
As sorted best with present things. The sun
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
As might affect the earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable; and from the north to call
Decrepit winter; from the south to bring
Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc[1] moon
Her office they prescribed; to the other five
Their planetary motions and aspects,
In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,[2]
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
In synod unbenign; and taught the fix'd
Their influence malignant when to shower,
Which of them, rising with the sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous: To the winds they set
Their corners, when with bluster to confound
Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
With terrour through the dark aëreal hall.
Some say he bid his Angels turn ascance

[1] 'Blanc:' French for white.—[2] 'Sextile, square,' &c.: astrological jargon.

The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more,
From the sun's axle; they with labour push'd
Oblique the centrick globe: Some say, the sun
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
Like-distant breadth to Taurus with the seven
Atlantic Sisters,[1] and the Spartan Twins,
Up to the tropick Crab; thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime: else had the spring
Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant flowers,
Equal in days and nights, except to those
Beyond the polar circles; to them day
Had unbenighted shone, while the low sun,
To recompense his distance, in their sight
Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
Or east or west; which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland,[2] and south as far
Beneath Magellan.[3] At that tasted fruit
The sun, as from Thyéstean banquet[4] turn'd
His course intended; else how had the world
Inhabited, though sinless, more than now,
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
These changes in the Heavens, though slow, produced
Like change on sea and land: sideral blast,
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
Corrupt and pestilent: Now from the north
Of Norumbega,[5] and the Samoed shore,[6]
Bursting their brazen dungeon, arm'd with ice,

[1] 'The seven Atlantic Sisters:' the Pleiades on the neck of the Bull.—[2] 'Estotiland:' a large tract of country in North America.—[3] 'Magellan:' a district in South America.—[4] 'Thyéstean banquet:' the banquet Atreus gave to his brother Thyéstes of his own children, at which the sun was said to turn away.—[5] 'Norumbega:' a province in North America.—[6] Samoed shore:' a province in Russia.

And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,
Boreas,[1] and Cæcias, and Argestes loud,
And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn;
With adverse blast upturns them from the south
Notus, and Afer black with thunderous clouds
From Serraliona; thwart of these, as fierce
Forth rush the Levant, and the Ponent winds,
Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began
Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,
Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
Death introduced, through fierce antipathy:
Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,
And fish with fish; to graze the herb all leaving,
Devour'd each other; nor stood much in awe
Of Man, but fled him; or, with countenance grim,
Glar'd on him passing. These were from without
The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandon'd, but worse felt within;
And, in a troubled sea of passion toss'd,
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint.
O miserable of happy! Is this the end
Of this new glorious world, and me so late
The glory of that glory, who now become
Accurs'd of blessed? hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my highth
Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end
The misery; I deserv'd it, and would bear
My own deservings; but this will not serve:
All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard

[1] 'Boreas,' &c.: a strange jumble of Latin and Italian names for varied winds.

Delightfully, *Encrease and multiply;*
Now death to hear! for what can I encrease,
Or multiply, but curses on my head?
Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
The evil on him brought by me, will curse
My head? Ill fare our ancestor impure,
For this we may thank Adam! but his thanks
Shall be the execration: so, besides
Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
Shall with a fierce reflux on me rebound;
On me, as on their natural center, light
Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me Man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious garden? As my will
Concurr'd not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust;
Desirous to resign and render back
All I receiv'd; unable to perform
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy justice seems; yet, to say truth, too late
I thus contest: then should have been refused
Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed:
Thou didst accept them: wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? and, though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son
Prove disobedient; and, reprov'd, retort,
"Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not:"
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee

That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,
But natural necessity, begot.
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
Thy punishment, then, justly is at his will.
Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair,
That dust I am and shall to dust return:
O welcome hour whenever! Why delays
His hand to execute what his decree
Fix'd on this day? Why do I overlive?
Why am I mock'd with death, and lengthen'd out
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
Mortality, my sentence, and be earth
Insensible! How glad would lay me down,
As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,
And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse
To me, and to my offspring, would torment me
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;
Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of Man
Which God inspir'd, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod: then, in the grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death? O thought
Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
Of life that sinn'd: what dies, but what had life
And sin? The body properly had neither.
All of me, then, shall die; let this appease
The doubt, since human reach no further knows.
For though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also? Be it; Man is not so,
But mortal doom'd. How can he exercise
Wrath without end on Man whom death must end?

Can he make deathless death? That were to make
Strange contradiction, which to God himself
Impossible is held; as argument
Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
For anger's sake, finite to infinite,
In punish'd man, to satisfy his rigour,
Satisfied never? That were to extend
His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law;
By which all causes else, according still
To the reception of their matter, act;
Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say
That death be not one stroke, as I suppos'd,
Bereaving sense, but endless misery
From this day onward; which I feel begun
Both in me and without me; and so last
To perpetuity;—Ay me! that fear
Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution
On my defenceless head: both Death and I
Am found eternal, and incorporate both;
Nor I on my part single; in me all
Posterity stands curs'd: Fair patrimony
That I must leave ye, Sons! O were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!
So disinherited, how would you bless
Me, now your curse! Ah! why should all mankind,
For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemn'd,
If guiltless? But from me what can proceed,
But all corrupt; both mind and will deprav'd,
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me? How can they, then, acquitted stand
In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,
Forc'd I absolve; all my evasions vain,
And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
But to my own conviction: first and last

On me, me only, as the source and spring
Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;
So might the wrath! Fond wish! couldst thou support
That burden, heavier than the earth to bear;
Than all the world much heavier, though divided
With that bad Woman? Thus, what thou desir'st,
And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope
Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example and future;
To Satan only like both crime and doom.
O Conscience! into what abyss of fears
And horrours hast thou driven me! out of which
I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd!
  Thus Adam to himself lamented loud
Through the still night; not now, as ere Man fell,
Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air
Accompanied, with damps, and dreadful gloom;
Which to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terrour: On the ground
Outstretch'd he lay, on the cold ground; and oft
Curs'd his creation; Death as oft accus'd
Of tardy execution, since denounc'd
The day of his offence. Why comes not Death,
Said he, with one thrice acceptable stroke
To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,
Justice Divine not hasten to be just?
But Death comes not at call; Justice Divine
Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers!
With other echo late I taught your shades
To answer, and resound far other song.—
  Whom, thus afflicted, when sad Eve beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,

Soft words to his fierce passion she assay'd;
But her with stern regard he thus repell'd.
Out of my sight, thou Serpent! That name best
Befits thee with him leagu'd, thyself as false
And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,
Like his, and colour serpentine, may show
Thy inward fraud; to warn all creatures from thee
Henceforth; lest that too heavenly form, pretended[1]
To hellish falsehood, snare them! But for thee
I had persisted happy; had not thy pride
And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
Rejected my forewarning, and disdain'd
Not to be trusted, longing to be seen,
Though by the Devil himself; him overweening
To overreach; but, with the Serpent meeting,
Fool'd and beguil'd: by him thou, I by thee,
To trust thee from my side; imagin'd wise,
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults;
And understood not all was but a show,
Rather than solid virtue; all but a rib
Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister, from me drawn;
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
To my just number found. O why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
With Spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of nature, and not fill the world at once
With Men, as Angels, without feminine;
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen,
And more that shall befall; innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares,

[1] 'Pretended;' *i. e.*, placed before hellish, &c.

And strait conjunction with this sex; for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd
By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld
By parents; or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already link'd and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.
He added not, and from her turn'd; but Eve,
Not so repuls'd, with tears that ceas'd not flowing,
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble; and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint.
Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness Heaven
What love sincere and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceiv'd! Thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not,
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress,
My only strength and stay: Forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace; both joining,
As join'd in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assign'd us,
That cruel Serpent: On me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befallen;
On me already lost, me than thyself
More miserable! Both have sinn'd; but thou
Against God only: I against God and thee;

And to the place of judgement will return,
There with my cries importune Heaven; that all
The sentence, from thy head remov'd, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe;
Me, me only, just object of his ire!
She ended weeping; and her lowly plight,
Immovable, till peace obtain'd from fault
Acknowledged and deplor'd, in Adam wrought
Commiseration: Soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress;
Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
His counsel, whom she had displeas'd, his aid.
As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost,
And thus with peaceful words uprais'd her soon.
Unwary, and too desirous, as before,
So now of what thou know'st not, who desirest
The punishment all on thyself; alas!
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
His full wrath, whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited;
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
To me committed, and by me expos'd.
But rise;—let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere; but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burden, in our share of woe;
Since this day's death denounc'd, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-pac'd evil;
A long day's dying, to augment our pain;
And to our seed (O hapless seed!) deriv'd.

To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied.
Adam, by sad experiment I know
How little weight my words with thee can find,
Found so erroneous; thence by just event
Found so unfortunate: Nevertheless,
Restor'd by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart
Living or dying, from thee I will not hide
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
Tending to some relief of our extremes,
Or end; though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
As in our evils, and of easier choice.
If care of our descent perplex us most,
Which must be born to certain woe, devour'd
By Death at last; and miserable it is
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
Into this cursed world a woful race,
That after wretched life must be at last
Food for so foul a monster; in thy power
It lies, yet, ere conception, to prevent
The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
Childless thou art, childless remain: so Death
Shall be deceiv'd his glut, and with us two
Be forc'd to satisfy his ravenous maw.
But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
From love's due rites, nuptial embraces sweet;
And with desire to languish without hope,
Before the present object languishing
With like desire; which would be misery
And torment less than none of what we dread;
Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free

From what we fear for both, let us make short,—
Let us seek Death;—or, he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves:
Why stand we longer shivering under fears
That show no end but death, and have the power,
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
Destruction with destruction to destroy?—
She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest; so much of death her thoughts
Had entertain'd, as dy'd her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing sway'd,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had rais'd; and thus to Eve replied.
Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent, than what thy mind contemns;
But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
That excellent thought in thee; and implies,
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overlov'd,
Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade
The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God
Hath wiselier arm'd his vengeful ire, than so
To be forestall'd; much more I fear lest death,
So snatch'd, will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay; rather, such acts
Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
To make death in us live: Then let us seek
Some safer resolution, which, methinks,
I have in view, calling to mind with heed
Part of our sentence, that thy Seed shall bruise
The Serpent's head; piteous amends! unless
Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,

Satan; who, in the serpent, hath contriv'd
Against us this deceit: To crush his head
Would be revenge indeed! which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
Resolv'd, as thou proposest; so our foe
Shall 'scape his punishment ordain'd, and we
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.
No more be mention'd, then, of violence
Against ourselves; and wilful barrenness,
That cuts us off from hope; and savours only
Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
Reluctance against God and his just yoke
Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
And gracious temper He both heard and judg'd,
Without wrath or reviling: we expected
Immediate dissolution, which we thought
Was meant by death that day; when lo! to thee
Pains only in childbearing were foretold,
And bringing forth; soon recompens'd with joy,
Fruit of thy womb: On me the curse aslope
Glanced on the ground; with labour I must earn
My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse;
My labour will sustain me; and, lest cold
Or heat should injure us, His timely care
Hath, unbesought, provided; and His hands
Cloth'd us unworthy, pitying while He judg'd;
How much more, if we pray Him, will His ear
Be open, and His heart to pity incline,
And teach us further by what means to shun
The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow!
Which now the sky, with various face, begins
To show us in this mountain; while the winds
Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
Of these fair-spreading trees; which bids us seek

Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
Our limbs benumm'd, ere this diurnal star
Leave cold the night, how we his gather'd beams
Reflected may with matter sere foment;
Or, by collision of two bodies, grind
The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds
Justling, or push'd with winds, rude in their shock,
Tine[1] the slant lightning; whose thwart flame, driven down,
Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine,
And sends a comfortable heat from far,
Which might supply the sun: Such fire to use,
And what may else be remedy or cure
To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,
He will instruct us praying, and of grace
Beseeching Him; so as we need not fear
To pass commodiously this life, sustain'd
By Him with many comforts, till we end
In dust, our final rest and native home.
What better can we do, than, to the place
Repairing where He judg'd us, prostrate fall
Before Him reverent; and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg; with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly He will relent, and turn
From His displeasure; in whose look serene,
When angry most He seem'd and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy, shone?
So spake our father penitent: nor Eve
Felt less remorse: they forthwith to the place
Repairing, where He judg'd them, prostrate fell

[1] 'Tine:' kindle.

Before Him reverent; and both confess'd
Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd; with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

BOOK XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them: God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of cherubim to dispossess them; but first to reveal to Adam future things: Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs; he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him: the angel denounces their departure. Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits; the angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the Flood.

THUS they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood
Praying; for, from the mercy-seat above,
Prevenient grace descending had remov'd
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead; that sighs now breath'd
Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer
Inspir'd, and wing'd for Heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory: Yet their port
Not of mean suitors; nor important less
Seem'd their petition, than when the ancient pair
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drown'd, before the shrine
Of Themis[1] stood devout. To Heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor miss'd the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they pass'd
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then, clad
With incense, where the golden altar fum'd
By their great Intercessour, came in sight

[1] 'Themis:' the goddess of justice.

Before the Father's throne: them the glad Son
Presenting, thus to intercede began.
See, Father, what first-fruits on earth are sprung
From thy implanted grace in Man; these sighs
And prayers, which in this golden censer, mix'd
With incense, I thy priest before thee bring;
Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen
From innocence. Now, therefore, bend thine ear
To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute;
Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
Interpret for him; me, his advocate
And propitiation; all his works on me,
Good, or not good, ingraft; my merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
Accept me; and, in me, from these receive
The smell of peace toward mankind: let him live
Before thee reconcil'd, at least his days
Number'd, though sad; till death, his doom (which I
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse),
To better life shall yield him: where, with me,
All my redeem'd may dwell in joy, and bliss;
Made one with me, as I with thee am one.

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene.
All thy request for Man, accepted Son,
Obtain; all thy request was my decree:
But, longer in that Paradise to dwell,
The law I gave to Nature him forbids:
Those pure immortal elements that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him, tainted now; and purge him off,
As a distemper, gross, to air as gross,

And mortal food; as may dispose him best
For dissolution wrought by sin, that first
Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts
Created him, endow'd; with happiness
And immortality: that fondly lost,
This other served but to eternize woe;
Till I provided death: so death becomes
His final remedy; and, after life,
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refin'd
By faith and faithful works, to second life,
Wak'd in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renew'd.
But let us call to synod all the Blest
Through Heaven's wide bounds: from them I will not hide
My judgements; how with mankind I proceed,
As how with peccant Angels late they saw,
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirm'd.
He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright minister that watch'd: he blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound at general doom. The angelick blast
Fill'd all the regions: from their blissful bowers
Of amarantine shade, fountain or spring,
By the waters of life, where'er they sat
In fellowships of joy, the sons of light
Hasted, resorting to the summons high;
And took their seats; till, from his throne supreme,
The Almighty thus pronounc'd his sovran will.
O sons, like one of us Man is become,
To know both good and evil, since his taste
Of that defended fruit; but let him boast
His knowledge of good lost, and evil got;

Happier, had it sufficed him to have known
Good by itself, and evil not at all.
He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,
My motions in him; longer than they move,
His heart I know, how variable and vain,
Self-left. Lest, therefore, his now bolder hand
Reach also of the tree of life, and eat,
And live for ever, dream at least to live
For ever, to remove him I decree,
And send him from the garden forth to till
The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.
Michael, this my behest have thou in charge;
Take to thee from among the Cherubim
Thy choice of flaming warriours, lest the Fiend,
Or in behalf of Man, or to invade
Vacant possession, some new trouble raise:
Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God,
Without remorse, drive out the sinful pair;
From hallow'd ground the unholy; and denounce
To them, and to their progeny, from thence
Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
At the sad sentence rigorously urg'd
(For I behold them soften'd, and with tears
Bewailing their excess), all terrour hide.
If patiently thy bidding they obey,
Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
To Adam what shall come in future days,
As I shall thee enlighten; intermix
My covenant in the Woman's seed renew'd;
So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace:
And on the east side of the garden place,
Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
Cherubick watch; and of a sword the flame
Wide waving; all approach far off to fright,

And guard all passage to the tree of life:
Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey;
With whose stolen fruit Man once more to delude.
He ceas'd; and the Arch-angelick power prepar'd
For swift descent; with him the cohort bright
Of watchful Cherubim: four faces each
Had, like a double Janus;[1] all their shape
Spangled with eyes more numerous than those
Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drouse,
Charm'd with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
Of Hermes, or his opiate rod.[2] Meanwhile,
To re-salute the world with sacred light,
Leucothea[3] wak'd, and with fresh dews imbalm'd
The earth; when Adam and first matron Eve
Had ended now their orisons, and found
Strength added from above; new hope to spring
Out of despair; joy, but with fear yet link'd;
Which thus to Eve his welcome words renew'd.
Eve, easily may faith admit that all
The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends;
But, that from us aught should ascend to Heaven,
So prevalent as to concern the mind
Of God High blest, or to incline His will,
Hard to belief may seem; yet this will prayer,
Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
Even to the seat of God. For since I sought
By prayer the offended Deity to appease;
Kneel'd, and before him humbled all my heart;
Methought I saw him placable and mild,
Bending His ear; persuasion in me grew

[1] 'Janus:' a king, afterwards a god in Italy, represented with two faces.—
[2] 'Opiate rod:' a wand of Mercury, able to give sleep to whomsoever he pleased. —[3] 'Leucothea:' the goddess of morning.

That I was heard with favour; peace return'd
Home to my breast, and to my memory
His promise, that thy seed shall bruise our foe;
Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now
Assures me that the bitterness of death
Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,
Eve rightly call'd, mother of all mankind,
Mother of all things living, since by thee
Man is to live; and all things live for Man.
To whom thus Eve, with sad demeanour meek.
Ill worthy I such title should belong
To me transgressour; who, for thee ordain'd
A help, became thy snare: to me reproach
Rather belongs, distrust, and all dispraise:
But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
That I, who first brought death on all, am grac'd
The source of life: next favourable thou,
Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsaf'st,
Far other name deserving. But the field
To labour calls us now with sweat impos'd,
Though after sleepless night; for see! the Morn,
All unconcern'd with our unrest, begins
Her rosy progress smiling: let us forth;
I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoin'd
Laborious till day droop: while here we dwell,
What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?
Here let us live, though in fallen state, content.
So spake, so wish'd much humbled Eve; but Fate
Subscrib'd not: *Nature first gave signs, impress'd*
On bird, beast, air; air suddenly eclips'd,
After short blush of morn; nigh in her sight
The bird of Jove *stoop'd from his aery tour,*
Two birds of gayest plume before him drove;

Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,[1]
First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind;
Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.
Adam observ'd, and with his eye the chase
Pursuing, not unmov'd, to Eve thus spake.

O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,
Which Heaven, by these mute signs in Nature, shows
Forerunners of his purpose; or to warn
Us, haply too secure of our discharge
From penalty, because from death releas'd
Some days: how long, and what till then our life,
Who knows? or more than this, that we are dust,
And thither must return, and be no more?
Why else this double object in our sight
Of flight pursued in the air, and o'er the ground,
One way the self-same hour? why in the east
Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning light
More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
And slow descends with something heavenly fraught?

He err'd not; for by this the heavenly bands
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt;
A glorious apparition, had not doubt
And carnal fear that day dimm'd Adam's eye.
Not that more glorious, when the angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim,[2] where he saw
The field pavilion'd with his guardians bright;
Nor that, which on the flaming mount appear'd
In Dothan, cover'd with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who, to surprise

[1] 'Beast that reigns in woods,' *i. e.*, a lion.—[2] 'Mahanaim:' see Genesis xxxii. 1, &c.—[3] 'Dothan:' see 2 Kings vi. 13.

One man, assassin-like, had levied war,
War unproclaim'd. The princely Hierarch
In their bright stand there left his Powers, to seize
Possession of the garden: he alone
To find where Adam shelter'd, took his way;
Not unperceiv'd of Adam, who to Eve,
While the great visitant approach'd, thus spake.
Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps
Of us will soon determine, or impose
New laws to be observ'd; for I descry
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
One of the heavenly host, and, by his gait,
None of the meanest; some great Potentate,
Or of the Thrones above; such majesty
Invests him coming! yet not terrible,
That I should fear; nor sociably mild,
As Raphaël, that I should much confide;
But solemn and sublime; whom, not to offend,
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.
He ended: and the Arch-Angel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape celestial, but as man
Clad to meet man; over his lucid arms
A military vest of purple flow'd,
Livelier than Melibœan,[1] or the grain
Of Sarra,[2] worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce; Iris[3] had dipt the woof;
His starry helm unbuckled show'd him prime
In manhood where youth ended: by his side,
As in a glistering zodiack, hung the sword,
Satan's dire dread; and in his hand the spear.
Adam bow'd low: he, kingly, from his state
Inclin'd not, but his coming thus declar'd.

[1] 'Melibœan:' from a city in Thessaly, famous for purple.—[2] 'Grain of Sarra:' from the name of a Tyrian fish which bleeds purple.—[3] 'Iris:' the rainbow.

Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs:
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard; and Death,
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days
Given thee of grace; wherein thou may'st repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May'st cover: Well may then thy Lord, appeas'd,
Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim;
But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not: to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the garden forth to till
The ground whence thou was taken, fitter soil.
He added not; for Adam at the news
Heart-struck with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound: Eve, who unseen
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discover'd soon the place of her retire.
O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native soil! these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods? where I had hope to spend
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names!
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?
Thee lastly, nuptial bower, by me adorn'd
With what to sight or smell was sweet! from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world; to this obscure

And wild? how shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits?
Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild.
Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart,
Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine:
Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes
Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound;
Where he abides, think there thy native soil.
Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
Recovering, and his scatter'd spirits return'd,
To Michael thus his humble words address'd.
Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or nam'd
Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem
Prince above princes! gently hast thou told
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
And in performing end us; what besides
Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring,
Departure from this happy place, our sweet
Recess, and only consolation left
Familiar to our eyes! All places else
Inhospitable appear, and desolate;
Nor knowing us, nor known: And, if by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will
Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary Him with my assiduous cries:
But prayer against His absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth:
Therefore to His great bidding I submit.
This most afflicts me, that departing hence
As from His face, I shall be hid, depriv'd
His blessed countenance: Here I could frequent

With worship place by place where He vouchsaf'd
Presence Divine; and to my sons relate,
"On this mount He appear'd; under this tree
Stood visible, among these pines His voice
I heard; here with Him at this fountain talk'd:"
So many grateful altars I would rear
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
Of lustre from the brook, in memory,
Or monument to ages; and thereon
Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers:
In yonder nether world where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or footstep trace?
For though I fled Him angry, yet recall'd
To life prolong'd and promis'd race, I now
Gladly behold though but His utmost skirts
Of glory; and far off His steps adore.
To whom thus Michael with regard benign.
Adam, thou know'st Heaven His, and all the Earth;
Not this rock only; His Omnipresence fills
Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
Fomented by his virtual power and warm'd:
All the earth He gave thee to possess and rule,
No despicable gift; surmise not, then,
His presence to these narrow bounds confin'd
Of Paradise, or Eden: this had been
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations; and had hither come
From all the ends of the earth, to celebrate
And reverence thee, their great progenitor.
But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons:
Yet doubt not but in valley, and in plain,
God is, as here; and will be found alike
Present; and of His presence many a sign

Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal love, His face
Express, and of His steps the track divine.
Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirm'd
Ere thou from hence depart, know, I am sent
To show thee what shall come in future days
To thee, and to thy offspring: good with bad
Expect to hear; supernal grace contending
With sinfulness of men; thereby to learn
True patience, and to temper joy with fear
And pious sorrow; equally inur'd
By moderation either state to bear,
Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
Safest thy life, and best prepar'd endure
Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
This hill; let Eve (for I have drench'd her eyes)
Here sleep below, while thou to foresight wak'st;
As once thou slept'st, while she to life was form'd.
To whom thus Adam gratefully replied.
Ascend, I follow thee, safe Guide, the path
Thou lead'st me; and to the hand of Heaven submit,
However chastening; to the evil turn
My obvious breast; arming to overcome
By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
If so I may attain. So both ascend,
In the visions of God. It was a hill,
Of Paradise the highest; from whose top
The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken,
Stretch'd out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.
Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,
Whereon, for different cause, the Tempter set
Our second Adam, in the wilderness;
To show him all Earth's kingdoms, and their glory.
His eye might there command wherever stood

City of old or modern fame, the seat
Of mightiest empire, from the destined wall
Of Cambalu,[1] seat of Cathaian Can,
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's[2] throne.
To Paquin[3] of Sinæan[4] kings; and thence
To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul,
Down to the golden Chersonese;[5] or where
The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
In Hispahan; or where the Russian Kzar
In Mosco; or the Sultan in Bizance,[6]
Turchestan-born;[7] nor could his eye not ken
The empire of Negus[8] to his utmost port
Ercoco,[9] and the less maritim kings
Mombaza,[10] and Quiloa, and Melind,
And Sofala, thought Ophir, to the realm
Of Congo, and Angola farthest south;
Or thence, from Niger flood to Atlas mount,
The kingdoms of Almansor,[11] Fez, and Sus,
Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen;
On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,[12]
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
Of Atabalipa;[13] and yet unspoil'd
Guiana,[14] whose great city Geryon's sons[15]
Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,

[1] 'Cambalu:' the principal city of Cathay.—[2] 'Temir:' Tamerlane.—[3] 'Paquin:' *i. e.*, Pekin.—[4] 'Sinæan:' Chinese.—[5] 'Chersonese,' *i. e.*, Malacca.—[6] 'Bizance:' Byzantium, now Constantinople.—[7] 'Turchestan:' a province of Tartary.—[8] 'Negus:' king of Upper Ethiopia.—[9] 'Ercoco:' Erquico, on the Red Sea.—[10] 'Mombaza,' &c.: all in Africa.—[11] 'Almansor,' &c.: kingdoms in Barbary.—[12] 'Montezume:' an Indian chief subdued by Cortez.—[13] 'Atabalipa:' the last Indian emperor subdued by Pizarro.—[14] 'Guiana:' in South America.—[15] 'Geryon's sons:' Spaniards, from the name of an ancient king of Spain.

Which that false fruit, that promis'd clearer sight,
Had bred; then purg'd with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see;
And from the well of life three drops instill'd.
So deep the power of these ingredients pierc'd,
Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,
That Adam now enforc'd to close his eyes,
Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranc'd;
But him the gentle Angel by the hand
Soon rais'd, and his attention thus recall'd.

Adam, now ope thine eyes; and first behold
The effects which thy original crime hath wrought
In some to spring from thee; who never touch'd
The excepted tree, nor with the snake conspir'd,
Nor sinn'd thy sin; yet from that sin derive
Corruption, to bring forth more violent deeds.

His eyes he open'd, and beheld a field,
Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves
New-reap'd; the other part sheep-walks and folds;
I' the midst an altar as the land-mark stood,
Rustick, of grassy sord;[1] thither anon
A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
First-fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,
Uncull'd, as came to hand; a shepherd next,
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid
The inwards and their fat, with incense strew'd,
On the cleft wood, and all due rites perform'd:
His offering soon propitious fire from Heaven
Consum'd with nimble glance, and grateful steam;
The other's not, for his was not sincere;
Whereat he inly raged, and as they talk'd,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone

[1] 'Sord:' sward.

That beat out life; he fell; and, deadly pale,
Groan'd out his soul with gushing blood effus'd.
Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismay'd, and thus in haste to the Angel cried.
O teacher, some great mischief hath befallen
To that meek man, who well had sacrific'd;
Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?
To whom Michael thus, he also mov'd, replied.
These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
Out of thy loins: the unjust the just hath slain,
For envy that his brother's offering found
From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact
Will be aveng'd; and the other's faith approv'd,
Lose no reward; though here thou see him die,
Rolling in dust and gore. To which our sire:
Alas! both for the deed and for the cause!
But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
I must return to native dust? O sight
Of terrour, foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!
To whom thus Michaël. Death thou hast seen
In his first shape on Man; but many shapes
Of death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave, all dismal: yet to sense
More terrible at the entrance, than within.
Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die;
By fire, flood, famine; by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear; that thou may'st know
What misery the inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men. Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark;
A lazar-house it seem'd; wherein were laid

Numbers of all diseas'd; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone, and ulcer, colick pangs,
Demoniac phrensy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus,[1] and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair
Tended the sick busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invok'd
With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born; compassion quell'd
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrain'd excess;
And scarce recovering words his plaint renew'd.
O miserable mankind, to what fall
Degraded, to what wretched state reserv'd!
Better end here unborn. Why is life given
To be thus wrested from us? rather, why
Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offer'd, or soon beg to lay it down;
Glad to be so dismiss'd in peace. Can thus
The image of God in Man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debas'd
Under inhuman pains? Why should not Man,
Retaining still divine similitude

[1] 'Marasmus:' a slow feverish consumption.

In part, from such deformities be free,
And, for his Maker's image sake, exempt?
Their Maker's image, answer'd Michael, then
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungovern'd Appetite; and took
His image whom they served, a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own;
Or if His likeness, by themselves defac'd;
While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness; worthily, since they
God's image did not reverence in themselves.
I yield it just, said Adam, and submit.
But is there yet no other way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To death, and mix with our connatural dust?
There is, said Michael, if thou well observe
The rule of *Not too much;* by temperance taught,
In what thou eat'st and drink'st; seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
Till many years over thy head return:
So may'st thou live; till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother's lap; or be with ease
Gather'd, not harshly pluck'd, for death mature:
This is Old Age; but then, thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
To wither'd, weak, and gray; thy senses then,
Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,
To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
A melancholy damp of cold and dry
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The balm of life. To whom our ancestor.

Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
Life much: bent rather, how I may be quit,
Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge;
Which I must keep till my appointed day
Of rendering up, and patiently attend
My dissolution. Michaël replied.
Nor love thy life, nor hate; but, what thou liv'st
Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven:
And now prepare thee for another sight.
He look'd, and saw a spacious plain, whereon
Were tents of various hues; by some were herds
Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ; and, who mov'd[1]
Their stops and chords, was seen; his volant touch,
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.[2]
In other part stood one who, at the forge[3]
Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
Had melted (whether found where casual fire
Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale,
Down to the veins of earth; thence gliding hot
To some cave's mouth; or whether wash'd by stream
From underground;) the liquid ore he drain'd
Into fit moulds prepar'd; from which he form'd
First his own tools; then what might else be wrought
Fusil or graven in metal. After these,
But on the hither side, a different sort
From the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat,
Down to the plain descended; by their guise
Just men they seem'd, and all their study bent
To worship God aright, and know his works

[1] 'Who mov'd:' Tubal.—[2] 'Fugue:' a term in music, expressing the correspondency of the parts.—[3] 'One who, at the forge:' Tubal-Cain.

Not hid; nor those things last, which might preserve
Freedom and peace to men; they on the plain
Long had not walk'd, when, from the tents, behold!
A bevy of fair women, richly gay
In gems and wanton dress; to the harp they sung
Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on:
The men, though grave, eyed them; and let their eyes
Rove without rein; till, in the amorous net
Fast caught, they lik'd; and each his liking chose;
And now of love they treat, till the evening star,
Love's harbinger, appear'd; then, all in heat,
They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke
Hymen, then first to marriage rites invok'd:
With feast and music all the tents resound.
Such happy interview, and fair event
Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
And charming symphonies, attach'd the heart
Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,
The bent of Nature; which he thus express'd.
  True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest
Much better seems this vision, and more hope
Of peaceful days portends, than those two past;
Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse;
Here Nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends.
  To whom thus Michael. Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet;
Created, as thou art, to nobler end
Holy and pure, conformity divine.
Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant, were the tents
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race
Who slew his brother; studious they appear
Of arts that polish life, inventers rare;
Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit
Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledg'd none.

Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good wherein consists
Woman's domestick honour and chief praise;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll[1] the tongue, and roll the eye:
To these that sober race of men, whose lives
Religious titled them the sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
Of these fair atheists; and now swim in joy,
Erelong to swim at large; and laugh, for which
The world erelong a world of tears must weep.
To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft.
O pity and shame, that they, who to live well
Enter'd so fair, should turn aside to tread
Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!
But still I see the tenor of Man's woe
Holds on the same, from Woman to begin.
From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,
Said the Angel, who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superiour gifts receiv'd.
But now prepare thee for another scene.
He look'd, and saw wide territory spread
Before him, towns, and rural works between;
Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise;
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single or in array of battle rang'd
Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood;

[1] 'Troll:' to use the tongue volubly and affectedly.

One way a band select from forage drives
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
From a fat meadow-ground; or fleecy flock,
Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain,
Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly,
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray;
With cruel tournament the squadrons join;
Where cattle pastur'd late, now scatter'd lies
With carcasses and arms the ensanguin'd field,
Deserted. Others to a city strong
Lay siege, encamp'd; by battery, scale, and mine,
Assaulting: others from the wall defend,
With dart and javelin, stones, and sulphurous fire;
On each hand slaughter and gigantic deeds.
In other parts the scepter'd heralds call
To council, in the city-gates; anon
Gray-headed men and grave, with warriours mix'd,
Assemble, and harangues are heard; but soon,
In factious opposition; till at last,
Of middle age one rising,[1] eminent
In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,
Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace,
And judgement from above: him old and young
Exploded, and had seized with violent hands,
Had not a cloud descending snatch'd him thence,
Unseen amid the throng: so violence
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
Lamenting turn'd full sad; O what are these,
Death's ministers, not men? who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew

[1] 'One rising:' Enoch, namely.

His brother: for of whom such massacre
Make they, but of their brethren; men of men?
But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven
Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?
To whom thus Michael. These are the product
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st;
Where good with bad were match'd, who of themselves
Abhor to join; and, by imprudence mix'd,
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
Such were these giants, men of high renown;
For in those days might only shall be admir'd,
And valour and heroick virtue call'd;
To overcome in battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human glory; and for glory done
Of triumph, to be styl'd great conquerours,
Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods;
Destroyers rightlier call'd, and plagues of men.
Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth;
And what most merits fame, in silence hid.
But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st
The only righteous in a world perverse,
And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With foes, for daring single to be just,
And utter odious truth, that God would come
To judge them with his Saints: him the Most High,
Wrapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds,
Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with God
High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
Exempt from death; to show thee what reward
Awaits the good; the rest what punishment;
Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold.
He look'd, and saw the face of things quite chang'd;

The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;
All now was turn'd to jollity and game,
To luxury and riot, feast and dance:
Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
Rape or adultery, where passing fair
Allur'd them; thence from cups to civil broils.
At length a reverend sire[1] among them came,
And of their doings great dislike declar'd,
And testified against their ways: he oft
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
Triumphs or festivals; and to them preach'd
Conversion and repentance, as to souls
In prison, under judgements imminent:
But all in vain: which, when he saw, he ceas'd
Contending, and remov'd his tents far off;
Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk;
Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and highth;
Smear'd round with pitch; and in the side a door
Contriv'd; and of provisions laid in large,
For man and beast: when, lo, a wonder strange!
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
Came sevens and pairs; and enter'd in as taught
Their order: last the sire and his three sons,
With their four wives; and God made fast the door.
Meanwhile the south wind rose, and with black wings
Wide hovering, all the clouds together drove
From under Heaven: the hills to their supply
Vapour, and exhalation, dusk and moist,
Sent up amain; and now the thicken'd sky
Like a dark cieling stood: down rush'd the rain
Impetuous; and continued, till the earth
No more was seen: the floating vessel swum

[1] 'Reverend sire:' Noah.

Uplifted, and secure with beaked prow
Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelm'd, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water roll'd: sea cover'd sea,
Sea without shore: and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reign'd, sea-monsters whelp'd
And stabled; of mankind, so numerous late,
All left, in one small bottom swum imbark'd.
How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation! Thee another flood,
Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drown'd,
And sunk thee as thy sons; till gently rear'd
By the Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
Though comfortless; as when a father mourns
His children, all in view destroy'd at once;
And scarce to the Angel utter'dst thus thy plaint.
O visions ill foreseen! Better had I
Lived ignorant of future! so had borne
My part of evil only, each day's lot
Enough to bear: those now, that were dispens'd
The burden of many ages, on me light
At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth
Abortive, to torment me ere their being,
With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
Him or his children; evil he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent;
And he the future evil shall no less
In apprehension than in substance feel,
Grievous to bear: but that care now is past,
Man is not whom to warn: those few escap'd
Famine and anguish will at last consume,
Wandering that watery desart. I had hope

When violence was ceased and war on earth,
All would have then gone well; peace would have crown'd
With length of happy days the race of Man;
But I was far deceiv'd; for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
How comes it thus? unfold, celestial guide,
And whether here the race of Man will end.
To whom thus Michael. Those whom last thou saw'st
In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, but of true virtue void;
Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
Subduing nations, and achiev'd thereby
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey;
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust; till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
The conquer'd also, and enslav'd by war,
Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose
And fear of God; from whom their piety feign'd
In sharp contést of battle found no aid
Against invaders; therefore, cool'd in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
Shall leave them to enjoy; for the Earth shall bear
More than enough, that temperance may be tried:
So all shall turn degenerate, all deprav'd;
Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot;
One man[1] except, the only son of light
In a dark age, against example good,
Against allurement, custom, and a world
Offended: fearless of reproach and scorn,

[1] 'One man:' Noah literally, but the passage faithfully describes Milton himself.

Or violence, he of their wicked ways
Shall them admonish; and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe
And full of peace; denouncing wrath to come
On their impenitence; and shall return
Of them derided, but of God observ'd
The one just man alive; by his command
Shall build a wonderous ark, as thou beheld'st,
To save himself and household from amidst
A world devote to universal wrack.
No sooner he, with them of man and beast
Select for life, shall in the ark be lodg'd
And shelter'd round; but all the cataracts
Of Heaven set open on the Earth, shall pour
Rain, day and night; all fountains of the deep,
Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
Beyond all bounds; till inundation rise
Above the highest hills: Then shall this mount
Of Paradise by might of waves be mov'd
Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood,
With all his verdure spoil'd, and trees adrift,
Down the great river to the opening gulf,
And there take root an island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals, and orcs,[1] and sea-mews' clang:
To teach thee that God attributes to place
No sanctity, if none be thither brought
By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.
And now, what further shall ensue, behold.
He look'd, and saw the ark hull on the flood,
Which now abated; for the clouds were fled,
Driven by a keen north wind, that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled[2] the face of deluge, as decay'd;

[1] 'Orcs:' a kind of whale.—[2] 'Wrinkled:' this reminds us of Byron's famous line in his Address to the Ocean, "Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow."

And the clear sun on his wide watery glass
Gaz'd hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the deep; who now had stopt
His sluices, as the Heaven his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,
Fast on the top of some high mountain fix'd.
And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear;
With clamour thence the rapid currents drive,
Towards the retreating sea, their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,
And after him, the surer messenger,
A dove sent forth once and again to spy
Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light:
The second time returning, in his bill
An olive-leaf he brings, pacifick sign:
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
The ancient sire descends with all his train;
Then, with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,
Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous with three listed colours[1] gay,
Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
Greatly rejoic'd; and thus his joy broke forth.
O thou, who future things canst represent
As present, heavenly Instructor! I revive
At this last sight, assur'd that Man shall live,
With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
Far less I now lament for one whole world
Of wicked sons destroy'd, than I rejoice
For one man found so perfect, and so just,

[1] 'Three colours:' *i. e.*, azure, green, and red.

That God vouchsafes to raise another world
From him, and all his anger to forget.
But say, what mean those colour'd streaks in heaven,
Distended, as the brow of God appeas'd?
Or serve they, as a flowery verge, to bind
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
Lest it again dissolve, and shower the earth?
To whom the Arch-Angel. Dexterously thou aim'st;
So willingly doth God remit his ire,
Though late repenting Him of Man deprav'd;
Griev'd at His heart, when looking down He saw
The whole earth fill'd with violence, and all flesh
Corrupting each their way; yet, those remov'd,
Such grace shall one just man find in His sight,
That He relents, not to blot out mankind;
And makes a covenant never to destroy
The earth again by flood; nor let the sea
Surpass his bounds: nor rain to drown the world,
With man therein or beast; but when He brings
Over the earth a cloud, will therein set
His triple-colour'd bow, whereon to look,
And call to mind His covenant: Day and night,
Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
Shall hold their course; till fire purge all things new,
Both Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell.

BOOK XII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The angel Michael continues, from the Flood, to relate what shall succeed: then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that seed of the woman shall be, which was promised Adam and Eve in the fall; his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension: the state of the Church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who in his journey bates at noon,
Though bent on speed; so here the Arch-Angel paus'd,
Betwixt the world destroy'd and world restor'd,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose:
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes.
  Thus thou hast seen one world begin and end;
And Man, as from a second stock, proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense:
Henceforth what is to come I will relate;
Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.
  This second source of men, while yet but few,
And while the dread of judgement past remains
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
With some regard to what is just and right
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace;
Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,
With large wine-offerings pour'd, and sacred feast,

Shall spend their days in joy unblam'd; and dwell
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
Under paternal rule: till one[1] shall rise
Of proud ambitious heart, who, not content
With fair equality, fraternal state,
Will arrogate dominion undeserv'd
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
Concord and love of nature from the earth;
Hunting (and men not beasts shall be his game)
With war and hostile snare such as refuse
Subjection to his empire tyrannous:
A mighty hunter thence he shall be styl'd
Before the Lord; as in despite of Heaven,
Or from Heaven, claiming second sovranty;
And from rebellion shall derive his name,
Though of rebellion others he accuse.
He with a crew, whom like ambition joins
With him or under him to tyrannize,
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find
The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
Boils out from underground, the mouth of Hell:
Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
A city and tower whose top may reach to Heaven;
And get themselves a name; lest, far dispers'd
In foreign lands, their memory be lost;
Regardless whether good or evil fame.
But God, who oft descends to visit men
Unseen, and through their habitations walks
To mark their doings, them beholding soon,
Comes down to see their city, ere the tower
Obstruct Heaven-towers; and in derision sets
Upon their tongues a various spirit,[2] to rase

[1] 'One:' Nimrod.—[2] 'Various spirit:' a spirit varying and confusing the sounds by which they would express their thoughts.

Quite out their native language; and, instead,
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud
Among the builders; each to other calls
Not understood; till hoarse, and all in rage,
As mock'd they storm: great laughter was in Heaven,
And looking down, to see the hubbub strange,
And hear the din: Thus was the building left
Ridiculous, and the work *Confusion* nam'd.
  Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeas'd.
O execrable son! so to aspire
Above his brethren; to himself assuming
Authority usurp'd, from God not given:
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By his donation; but Man over men
He made not lord; such title to Himself
Reserving, human left from human free.
But this usurper his encroachment proud
Stays not on Man; to God his tower intends
Siege and defiance: Wretched man! what food
Will he convey up thither, to sustain
Himself and his rash army; where thin air
Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
And famish him of breath, if not of bread?
  To whom thus Michael. Justly thou abhorr'st
That son, who on the quiet state of men
Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
Rational liberty; yet know withal,
Since thy original lapse, true liberty
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being:
Reason in man obscur'd, or not obey'd,
Immediately inordinate desires,

And upstart passions, catch the government
From reason; and to servitude reduce
Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits
Within himself unworthy powers to reign
Over free reason, God, in judgement just,
Subjects him from without to violent lords;
Who oft as undeservedly enthral
His outward freedom: Tyranny must be;
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice, and some fatal curse annex'd,
Deprives them of their outward liberty;
Their inward lost: Witness the irreverent son
Of him who built the ark; who for the shame
Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
Servant of servants, on his vicious race.
Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse; till God at last,
Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
His presence from among them, and avert
His holy eyes; resolving from thenceforth
To leave them to their own polluted ways;
And one peculiar nation to select
From all the rest, of whom to be invok'd,
A nation from one faithful man[1] to spring:
Him, on this side Euphrates yet residing,
Bred up in idol-worship: O that men,
(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
While yet the patriarch lived who 'scaped the flood,
As to forsake the living God, and fall
To worship their own work in wood and stone
For gods! Yet him God the Most High vouchsafes

[1] 'One faithful man:' Abraham.

To call by vision, from his father's house,
His kindred, and false gods, into a land
Which He will show him; and from him will raise
A mighty nation; and upon him shower
His benediction so, that in his seed
All nations shall be blest: he straight obeys;
Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes:
I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith
He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,
Ur of Chaldæa, passing now the ford
To Haran; after him a cumbrous train
Of herds, and flocks, and num'rous servitude;
Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
With God, who call'd him, in a land unknown.
Canaan he now attains; I see his tents
Pitch'd about Sechem,[1] and the neighbouring plain
Of Moreh; there, by promise, he receives
Gift to his progeny of all that land,
From Hamath northward to the Desart south;
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnam'd);
From Hermon east to the great western sea:
Mount Hermon, yonder sea; each place behold
In prospect, as I point them; on the shore
Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted stream,
Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons
Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
This ponder, that all nations of the earth
Shall in his seed be blessed: By that seed
Is meant thy Great Deliverer, who shall bruise
The Serpent's head; whereof to thee anon
Plainlier shall be reveal'd. This patriarch bless'd,
Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call,
A son, and of his son a grandchild, leaves;

[1] 'Sechem,' &c.: see Genesis.

Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown.
The grandchild, with twelve sons encreas'd, departs
From Canaan to a land hereafter call'd
Egypt, divided by the river Nile;
See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
Into the sea: To sojourn in that land
He comes, invited by a younger son
In time of dearth; a son, whose worthy deeds
Raise him to be the second in that realm
Of Pharaoh: There he dies, and leaves his race
Growing into a nation, and now grown
Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves
Inhospitably, and kills their infant males;
Till by two brethren (these two brethren call
Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim
His people from enthralment, they return,
With glory and spoil, back to their promis'd land.
But first the lawless tyrant, who denies
To know their God, or message to regard,
Must be compell'd by signs and judgements dire;
To blood unshed the rivers must be turn'd;
Frogs, lice, and flies, must all his palace fill
With loath'd intrusion, and fill all the land;
His cattle must of rot and murren die;
Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,
And all his people; thunder mix'd with hail,
Hail mix'd with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,
And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls;
What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down
Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green;
Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,

Palpable darkness, and blot out three days;
Last, with one midnight stroke, all the first-born
Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds
The river-dragon tam'd, at length submits
To let his sojourners depart, and oft
Humbles his stubborn heart; but still, as ice
More harden'd after thaw; till, in his rage,
Pursuing whom he late dismiss'd, the sea
Swallows him with his host; but them lets pass,
As on dry land, between two crystal walls;
Aw'd by the rod of Moses so to stand
Divided, till his rescued gain their shore:
Such wonderous power God to his saint will lend,
Though present in his Angel; who shall go
Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire;
By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire;
To guide them in their journey, and remove
Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues:
All night he will pursue; but his approach
Darkness defends between till morning watch;
Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud
God looking forth will trouble all his host,
And craze their chariot-wheels: when, by command,
Moses once more his potent rod extends
Over the sea, the sea his rod obeys;
On their embattled ranks the waves return,
And overwhelm their war: The race elect
Safe towards Canaan from the shore advance
Through the wild Desart, not the readiest way;
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarm'd,
War terrify them inexpert, and fear
Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
Inglorious life with servitude; for life
To noble and ignoble is more sweet

Untrain'd in arms, where rashness leads not on.
This also shall they gain by their delay
In the wide wilderness; there they shall found
Their government, and their great senate choose
Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordain'd:
God from the mount of Sinai, whose gray top
Shall tremble, He descending, will Himself
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpets' sound,
Ordain them laws; part, such as appertain
To civil justice; part, religious rites
Of sacrifice; informing them, by types
And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise
The Serpent, by what means He shall achieve
Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
To mortal ear is dreadful: They beseech
That Moses might report to them His will,
And terrour cease: He grants what they besought,
Instructed that to God is no access
Without Mediator, whose high office now
Moses in figure bears; to introduce
One greater, of whose day he shall foretel,
And all the Prophets in their age the times
Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus laws and rites
Establish'd, such delight hath God in men
Obedient to His will, that He vouchsafes
Among them to set up His tabernacle;
The Holy One with mortal men to dwell:
By his prescript a sanctuary is fram'd
Of cedar, overlaid with gold; therein
An ark, and in the ark His testimony,
The records of His covenant; over these
A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
Of two bright Cherubim: before Him burn
Seven lamps, as in a zodiack representing

The heavenly fires;[1] over the tent a cloud
Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night;
Save when they journey: and at length they come,
Conducted by His Angel, to the land
Promised to Abraham and his seed: The rest
Were long to tell; how many battles fought;
How many kings destroy'd, and kingdoms won;
Or how the sun shall in mid Heaven stand still
A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
Man's voice commanding, "Sun, in Gibeon stand,
And thou, moon, in the vale of Aialon,
Till Israel overcome!" so call the third
From Abraham, son of Isaac; and from him
His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win.
Here Adam interpos'd. O, sent from heaven,
Enlightener of my darkness! gracious things
Thou hast reveal'd; those chiefly which concern
Just Abraham and his seed; now first I find
Mine eyes true-opening, and my heart much eas'd,
Erewhile perplex'd with thoughts, what would become
Of me and all mankind: But now I see
His day in whom all nations shall be blest;
Favour unmerited by me, who sought
Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
This yet I apprehend not, why to those
Among whom God will deign to dwell on earth
So many and so various laws are given;
So many laws argue so many sins
Among them; how can God with such reside?
To whom thus Michael. Doubt not but that sin
Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
And therefore was law given them, to evince
Their natural pravity, by stirring up

[1] 'The heavenly fires:' the seven planets only then known.

Sin against law to fight; that when they see
Law can discover sin, but not remove,
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for Man;
Just for unjust; that, in such righteousness
To them by faith imputed, they may find
Justification towards God, and peace
Of conscience; which the law by ceremonies
Cannot appease; nor Man the moral part
Perform, and not performing, cannot live.
So law appears imperfect, and but given
With purpose to resign them, in full time,
Up to a better covenant; disciplin'd
From shadowy types to truth; from flesh to spirit;
From imposition of strict laws to free
Acceptance of large grace; from servile fear
To filial; works of law to works of faith.
And therefore shall not Moses, though of God
Highly belov'd, being but the minister
Of law, his people into Canaan lead;
But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call,
His name and office bearing, who shall quell
The adversary-Serpent, and bring back
Through the world's wilderness long wander'd Man
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan plac'd,
Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
National interrupt their publick peace,
Provoking God to raise them enemies;
From whom as oft he saves them penitent,
By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom
The second, both for piety renown'd
And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive

'Irrevocable, that his regal throne
For ever shall endure; the like shall sing
All Prophecy, that of the royal stock
Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
A Son, the Woman's seed to thee foretold,
Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
All nations; and to kings foretold, of kings
The last; for of his reign shall be no end.
But first, a long succession must ensue;
And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed,
The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
Such follow him as shall be register'd,
Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll;
Whose foul idolatries, and other faults
Heap'd to the popular sum, will so incense
God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
Their city, his temple, and his holy ark,
With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
To that proud city, whose high walls thou saw'st
Left in confusion; Babylon thence call'd.
There in captivity He lets them dwell
The space of seventy years; then brings them back,
Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn
To David, 'stablished as the days of Heaven.
Return'd from Babylon by leave of kings
Their lords, whom God dispos'd, the house of God
They first re-edify; and for a while
In mean estate live moderate; till, grown
In wealth and multitude, factious they grow;
But first among the priests dissension springs,
Men who attend the altar, and should most
Endeavour peace: their strife pollution brings
Upon the temple itself: at last they seize

The sceptre, and regard not David's sons;
Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
Anointed King Messiah might be born
Barr'd of his right: yet at his birth a star,
Unseen before in Heaven, proclaims him come;
And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold:
His place of birth a solemn Angel tells
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night;
They gladly thither haste, and by a choir
Of squadron'd Angels hear his carol sung.
A virgin is his mother, but his sire
The power of the Most High: He shall ascend
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the heavens.
He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy
Surcharg'd, as had like grief been dew'd in tears,
Without the vent of words; which these he breath'd.
O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
What oft my steadiest thoughts have search'd in vain;
Why our Great Expectation should be call'd
The seed of Woman: Virgin mother, hail,
High in the love of Heaven; yet from my loins
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
Of God Most High; so God with Man unites!
Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise
Expect with mortal pain: Say, where and when
Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the victor's heel.
To whom thus Michael. Dream not of their fight
As of a duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel: Not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy; nor so is overcome

Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,
Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound:
Which He, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works
In thee and in thy seed: Nor can this be
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
Obedience to the law of God, impos'd
On penalty of death, and suffering death,
The penalty to thy transgression due,
And due to their's which out of thine will grow:
So only can high Justice rest appaid.[1]
The law of God exact he shall fulfil
Both by obedience and by love, though love
Alone fulfil the law; thy punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death;
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption; and that his obedience,
Imputed, becomes theirs by faith; his merits
To save them, not their own though legal works.
For this he shall live hated, be blasphem'd,
Seiz'd on by force, judg'd, and to death condemn'd,
A shameful and accurs'd, nail'd to the cross
By his own nation; slain for bringing life:
But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
The law that is against thee, and the sins
Of all mankind, with him there crucified,
Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
In this his satisfaction; so he dies,
But soon revives: Death over him no power
Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light
Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,

[1] 'Appaid:' satisfied.

Thy ransom paid, which Man from death redeems,
His death for Man, as many as offer'd life
Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
By faith not void of works; This Godlike act
Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,
In sin for ever lost from life; this act
Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,
Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms;
And fix far deeper in his head their stings
Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel,
Or their's whom he redeems; a death, like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life.
Nor after resurrection shall he stay
Longer on earth than certain times to appear
To his disciples, men who in his life
Still followed him; to them shall leave in charge
To teach all nations what of him they learn'd,
And his salvation; them who shall believe
Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
Pure, and in mind prepar'd, if so befall,
For death, like that which the Redeemer died.
All nations they shall teach; for, from that day,
Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins
Salvation shall be preach'd, but to the sons
Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world,
So in his seed all nations shall be blest.
Then to the Heaven of Heavens he shall ascend
With victory, triumphing through the air
Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
The Serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains
Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;
Then enter into glory, and resume
His seat at God's right hand, exalted high,

Above all names in Heaven; and thence shall come,
When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,
With glory and power to judge both quick and dead;
To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward
His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
Whether in Heaven or Earth; for then the Earth
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
Than this of Eden, and far happier days.
So spake the Arch Angel Michaël; then paus'd,
As at the world's great period; and our sire,
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied.
O Goodness infinite, Goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done and occasion'd; or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring;
To God more glory, more goodwill to men
From God; and over wrath grace shall abound.
But say, if our Deliverer up to Heaven
Must reascend, what will betide the few
His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,
The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide
His people, who defend? Will they not deal
Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?
Be sure they will, said the Angel; but from Heaven
He to his own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them; and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth; and also arm
With spiritual armour, able to resist

Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts;
What man can do against them not afraid,
Though to the death; against such cruelties
With inward consolations recompens'd,
And oft supported so as shall amaze
Their proudest persecutors; For the Spirit,
Pour'd first on his Apostles, whom he sends
To evangelize the nations, then on all
Baptiz'd, shall them with wonderous gifts endue
To speak all tongues and do all miracles,
As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
Great numbers of each nation to receive
With joy the tidings brought from Heaven: At length
Their ministry perform'd, and race well run,
Their doctrine and their story written left,
They die; but in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition; and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places, and titles, and with these to join
Secular power; though feigning still to act
By spiritual; to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promised alike and given
To all believers; and, from that pretence,
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience; laws which none shall find
Left them inroll'd, or what the Spirit within
Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind

His consort Liberty? what, but unbuild
His living temples, built by faith to stand,
Their own faith, not another's? for, on Earth,
Who against faith and conscience can be heard
Infallible? Yet many will presume:
Whence heavy persecution shall arise
On all who in the worship persevere
Of spirit and truth: the rest, far greater part,
Will deem in outward rites and specious forms
Religion satisfied: Truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of faith
Rarely be found: So shall the world go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign;
Under her own weight groaning; till the day
Appear of respiration[1] to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of Him so lately promised to thy aid,
The Woman's Seed; obscurely then foretold,
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord;
Last, in the clouds from Heaven to be reveal'd
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world; then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,
New Heavens, new Earth, ages of endless date,
Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love;
To bring forth fruits, joy, and eternal bliss!
He ended; and thus Adam last replied.
How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,
Measur'd this transient world, the race of time,
Till time stand fix'd! Beyond is all abyss,
Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart;
Greatly in peace of thought; and have my fill

[1] 'Respiration:' refreshing. See Acts iii. 19.

Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God, to walk
As in His presence; ever to observe
His providence; and on Him sole depend,
Merciful over all His works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek; that suffering for truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory,
And, to the faithful, death the gate of life;
Taught this by his example, whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.

To whom thus also the Angel last replied.
This having learn'd, thou hast attain'd the sum
Of wisdom: hope no higher, though all the stars
Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
Or works of God in Heaven, Air, Earth, or Sea,
And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,
And all the rule, one empire; only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
By name to come call'd charity, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far.—
Let us descend now therefore from this top
Of speculation: for the hour precise
Exacts our parting hence: and see! the guards,
By me encamp'd on yonder hill, expect
Their motion; at whose front a flaming sword,

In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.
We may no longer stay; go, waken Eve;
Her also I with gentle dreams have calm'd,
Portending good, and all her spirits compos'd
To meek submission: thou, at season fit,
Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard;
Chiefly, what may concern her faith to know,
The great deliverance by her seed to come
(For by the Woman's seed) on all mankind:
That ye may live, which will be many days,
Both in one faith unanimous, though sad,
With cause, for evils past; yet much more cheer'd
With meditation on the happy end.
He ended, and they both descend the hill;
Descended, Adam to the bower, where Eve
Lay sleeping, ran before; but found her wak'd;
And thus with words not sad she him receiv'd.
Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know;
For God is also in sleep; and dreams advise,
Which He hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress
Wearied I fell asleep: But now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime are banish'd hence.
This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence; though all by me is lost,
Such favour I unworthy am vouchsaf'd,
By me the Promised Seed shall all restore.
So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard,
Well pleas'd but answer'd not: For now, too nigh
The Arch-Angel stood; and from the other hill

To their fix'd station, all in bright array
The Cherubim descended; on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as evening mist
Risen from a river o'er the marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel
Homeward returning. High in front advanc'd,
The brandish'd sword of God before them blaz'd,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime: whereat
In either hand the hastening Angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjécted plain; then disappear'd.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Wav'd over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropt, but wip'd them soon:
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

THE END.

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